



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

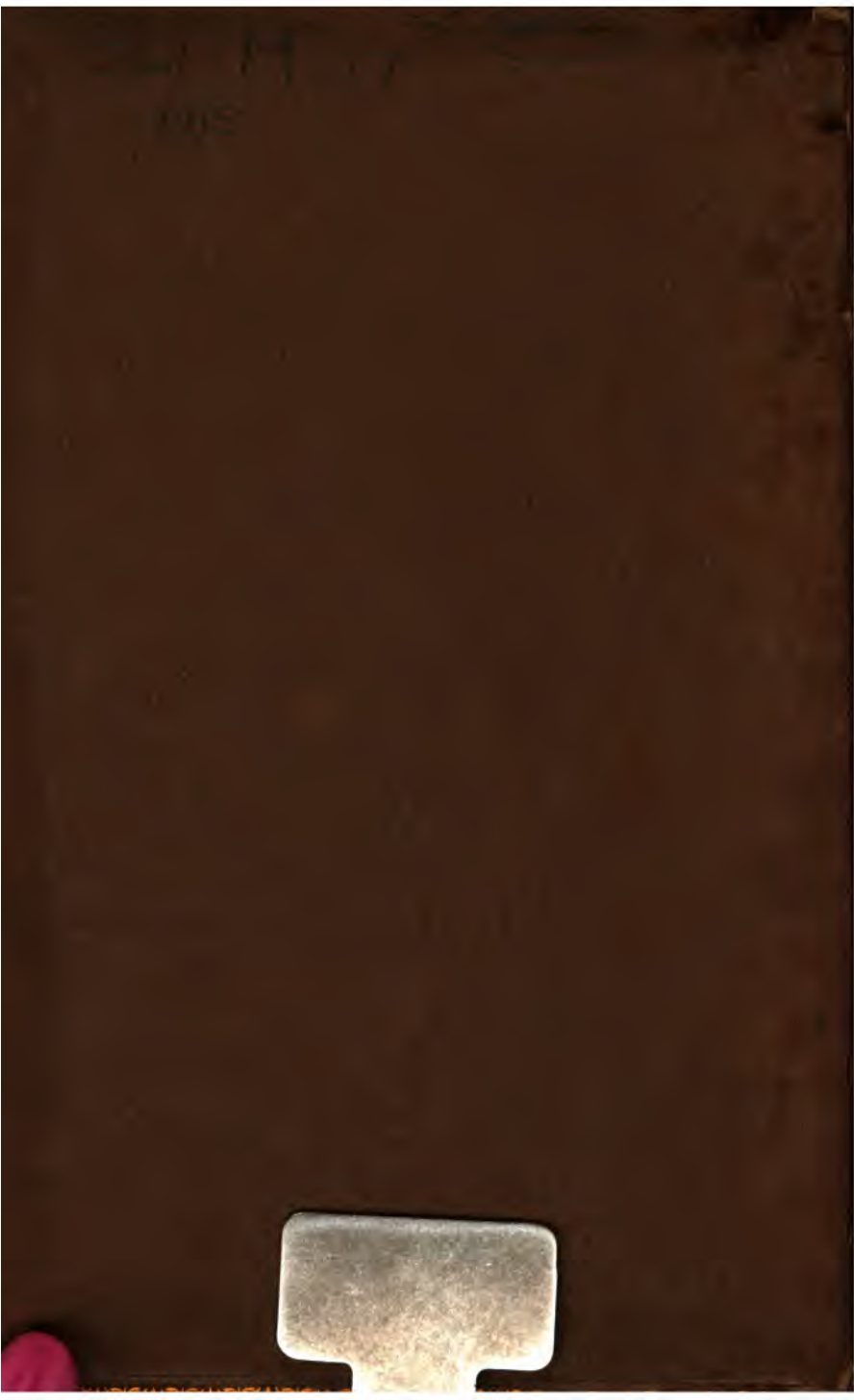
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





561 M. 27^W

STACK RBS.

***Stuart Piggott Bequest
November 1996***



NORTHERN ANTIQUITIES:

OR

A DESCRIPTION

OF THE

Manners, Customs, Religion and Laws

OF THE

ANCIENT DANES,

INCLUDING THOSE OF

OUR OWN SAXON ANCESTORS.

WITH A TRANSLATION OF THE EDDA, OR
SYSTEM OF RUNIC MYTHOLOGY, AND
OTHER PIECES, FROM THE ANCIENT
ICELANDIC TONGUE.

Translated from "L'Introduction a l'Histoire de
Dannemarc, &c. Par Mons. MALLET."

WITH ADDITIONAL NOTES BY THE ENGLISH TRANSLATOR,
AND GORANSON'S LATIN VERSION OF THE EDDA.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED BY C. STEWART.

1809.



TO HIS GRACE

THE

DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND.

MY LORD,

THE following work is inscribed to your Grace with the most genuine respect, and, I flatter myself, not without propriety, since it may possibly afford amusement to one of the most polished Noblemen of the present age, to observe from what rude and simple beginnings our highest improvements have been derived; and to trace to their source those peculiarities of character, manners and government, which so remarkably distinguish the Teutonic nations.

Among the historical digressions which our Author has scattered through his work, is a full relation of the first settlement of the NORMANS in France. This cannot but be interesting to your Grace, as the great Family, which you so nobly represent, derived their origin from one of the Northern Chiefs who assisted in that conquest. From the place of their residence in Lower Normandy*, they took the name of PERCY; a name which was afterwards eminently celebrated in our English annals, and which you have revived with additional lustre.

* Near Villedieu, in the District of St Lo.

Among the many shining and amiable qualities which distinguish your Grace and the Duchess of Northumberland, none have appeared to me more truly admirable than that high respect and reverence which you both of you show for the heroic Race whose possessions you inherit.

Superior to the mean and selfish jealousy of those, who, conscious of their own want of dignity or worth, consign to oblivion the illustrious dead, and wish to blot out all remembrance of them from the earth ; you, my Lord, have, with a more than filial piety, been employed for many years in restoring and reviving every memorial of the PERCY name.

Descended, yourself, from a most ancient and respectable family ; and not afraid to be compared with your noble predecessors, the Earls of NORTHUMBERLAND, you have repaired their monuments, rebuilt their castles, and replaced their trophies : and whatever appears to be any way connected with them, is sure to attract your attention and regard.

With this generosity of mind, added to your taste, munificence, and love of the arts, can we wonder that your name is the delight and ornament of the English nation ? or that it is equally dear to a sister country, where your upright and disinterested plan of government, your politeness and magnificence established your dominion over every heart ; and where the engaging and
exalted

exalted virtues of the Duchess have left an impression never to be effaced.

That you may both of you long enjoy those distinguished honours, and that princely fortune, which you so highly adorn : That they may be transmitted down, in your own posterity, to the latest ages, is the sincere and fervent wish of,

My Lord,

Your Grace's

Most humble, and

Most devoted servant,

THE EDITOR.



CONTENTS

OF

VOLUME I.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

Proofs that the Teutonic and Celtic Nations were *ab origine* two distinct people.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

General account of the work, its connection with his proposed history of Denmark, &c.

CHAPTER I. Denmark described and the several countries subject to its crown, viz. Norway, Iceland, Greenland,.....page 1

CHAP. II. Of the first inhabitants of Denmark, and particularly of the Cimbri,.....18

CHAP. III. Of the grounds of the ancient history of Denmark and of the different opinions concerning it,.....36

CHAP. IV. Of Odin, his arrival in the north, his conquests and the changes which he made,.....50

I.

CHAP.

	Page
CHAP. v. A general idea of the ancient religion of the northern nations,.....	63
CHAP. VI. Of the religion which prevailed in the north, and particularly in Scandinavia after the death of Odin,.....	71
CHAP. VII. Of the exterior worship and religious ceremonies of the northern nations,.....	105
CHAP. VIII. Of the form of government which formerly prevailed in the north,.....	133
CHAP. IX. The passion of the ancient Scandinavians for arms: their valour; the manner in which they made war. A digression concerning the state of population among them,.....	164
CHAP. X. Of the maritime expeditions of the ancient Danes,.....	208
CHAP. XI. Sequel of the maritime expeditions of the ancient Danes and Norwegians. The discovery of Iceland and Greenland, and of an unknown country called Vinland, (thought to be part of North America,).....	227
CHAP. XII. Of the customs and manners of the ancient northern nations,.....	259
CHAP. XIII. Sequel of the customs, arts, and sciences of the ancient Scandinavians,.....	293
Conclusion,.....	339

THE
TRANSLATOR'S
P R E F A C E.

THE Author of the following Work had a share in the education of that amiable Prince, CHRISTIAN VII. King of Denmark, who lately honoured this nation with a visit. During his residence in the North; our Author, Mons. MALLET (who has all the talents of a fine writer) was engaged by the late King, FREDERICK V. to write a History of Denmark in the French Language. By way of Introduction to that History, he drew up these two prefatory Volumes, the merit of which has long been acknowledged in most parts of Europe.

Though intended only as a Preliminary Piece, it has all the merit of a complete independent work; and, except to the natives of Denmark, is much more interesting and entertaining than the History itself, which it was intended to precede. It very early engaged the attention of the present Translator; whose reading having run somewhat in the same track with that of the Author, made him fond of the subject, and tempted him to give, in an English dress, a work in which it was displayed with so much advantage. As he happened also to have many of the original books from which the French Author had taken his materials, he flattered himself they would supply some illustrations, which might give an additional value to the Version.

For this reason, as also to afford himself an agreeable amusement, the Translator some time ago undertook this work; but a series of unexpected avocations intervened, and it was thrown aside for several years. At length he was prevailed upon to resume it; and as many of his friends were so obliging as to share among them different parts of the translation, he had little more to do, but to compare their per-

formances with the original, and to superadd such remarks as occurred to him. These are generally distinguished from those of the Author by the letter T*.

He was the rather invited to undertake this task, as he perceived the Author had been drawn in to adopt an opinion that has been a great source of mistake and confusion to many learned writers of the ancient history of Europe; viz. that of supposing the ancient Gauls and Germans, the Britons and Saxons, to have been all originally one and the same people; thus confounding the antiquities of the Gothic and Celtic nations. This crude opinion, which perhaps was first taken up by Cluverius†, and maintained by him with uncommon erudition, has been since incautiously adopted by Keyser‡ and Pelloutier§, the latter of whom has, with great diligence and skill, endeavoured to confirm it. In short, so much learning and ingenuity have scarcely ever been more perversely and erroneously applied, or brought to adorn and support a more groundless hypothesis. This mistake the Translator thought might be easily corrected in the present work; and by weeding out this one error, he hoped he should obtain the Author's pardon, and acquire some merit with the English reader ||.

And that it is an error, he thinks will appear from the attentive consideration of a few particulars, which can here be only mentioned in brief: For to give the subject a thorough discussion, and to handle it in its full extent, would far exceed the limits of this short Preface.

The ancient and original inhabitants of Europe, according to Cluverius and Pelloutier, consisted only of two distinct races of men, viz. the CELTS and SARMATIANS; and that from one or other of these, but chiefly from the former, all the ancient nations of Europe are descended. The Sarmatians, or Sauromatæ, were the ancestors of all the Slavonian tribes, viz. the Poles, Russians, Bohemians, Walachi-
ans,

* When the present translation was undertaken, only the first edition of the original had appeared; and from that several of the first chapters were translated: In that edition, the first volume was not, as here, divided into XIII. Chapters, but into V. Books. Afterwards, the Author revised his work, and published a new edition, in which he not only made the new division above-mentioned, but many considerable alterations both in the Text and Notes. It was necessary to accommodate the version to this new revision, but the Translator could not help retaining in the margin many of the rejected passages, which he thought too valuable to be wholly discarded.

† Philippi Cluverii Germaniæ Antiquæ Libri Tres, &c. Lugduni Batav. apud Elzev. 1616. folio.

‡ Antiquitates Selectæ Septentrionales et Celticæ, &c. Autore Joh. Georgio Keyser, &c. Hannoveræ 1720. 8vo.

§ Histoire des Celtes, et particulièrement des Gaulois et des Germains, &c. par Mr. Simon Pelloutier. Haye 1750. 2 Tom. 12mo. This learned writer, who is a protestant Minister, Counsellor of the Consistory, and Librarian to the Academy at Berlin, is descended from a family originally of Languedoc, and was born at Leipsic, 27th October, 1694, O. S. (v. *France littéraire*, Tom. 1.)

|| Though the words *Gothic* or *Teutonic* are often substituted in the translation instead of the Author's favourite word *Celtique*; yet care has been taken to represent the Author's own expression in the margin. Sometimes, where it was not needful to be very precise, the word *Gothic* has only been added to the Author's word *Celtic*; but the insertion is carefully distinguished by inverted commas.

ans, &c. who continue to this day a distinct and separate people, extremely different in their character, manners, laws, and language from the other race, which was that of the Celts; from whom (they will have it) were uniformly descended the old inhabitants of Gaul, Germany, Scandinavia, Britain, and Spain, who were all included by the ancients under the general name of Hyperboreans, Scythians, and Celts, being all originally of one race and nation, and having all the same common language, religion, laws, customs, and manners.

This is the position which these writers have adopted, and maintained with an uncommon display of deep erudition, and a great variety of specious arguments. But that their position, so far as relates to the Celts, is erroneous, and the arguments that support it inconclusive, will appear, if it can be shewn, That ancient Germany, Scandinavia, Gaul, and Britain, were not inhabited by the descendants of one single race; but, on the contrary, divided between two very different people; the one of whom we shall call, with most of the Roman authors, *CELTIC*, who were the ancestors of the Gauls, Britons, and Irish; the other, *GOTHIC*, or *TEUTONIC*, from whom the Germans, Belgians, Saxons, and Scandinavians derived their origin; and that these were, *ab origine*, two distinct people, very unlike in their manners, customs, religion, and laws.

As to the arguments by which Cluverius and Pelloutier support their hypothesis, that the Gothic and Celtic nations were the same, they may all be reduced to two heads; viz. either to *QUOTATIONS* from the ancient Greek and Roman writers, or to *ETYMOLOGIES* of the names of persons or places, &c.

With regard to the latter, (viz. *Etymologies*), these two writers lay it down, that the present German, or High Dutch, is a genuine daughter of the ancient Celtic or Gaulish language*; because, from it they can explain the etymology of innumerable names that were well known to be Gaulish or Celtic†; and this being admitted, it must follow, that the Germans are a branch of the Celts; and consequently, that the Celtic and Teutonic nations were the same. In prosecuting this argument, it must be acknowledged, that they have produced many instances that appear at first sight very plausible. But whoever considers how little we can depend upon the Etymology of obsolete words, derived from barbarous dead languages, in which there are no books extant, will not build very securely on proofs of this sort. No one will assert, that the present German bears any resemblance now to the modern Welsh and Irish languages; and yet there are writers in abundance, who will undertake to account for the name of almost every place, person, or office in ancient Europe, from one or other of these two living tongues, and will produce instances full as plausible and conclusive as any adduced by Cluverius or his followers;

* *La langue Allemande est un reste de l'ancienne langue des Celtes.* Belloutier, Vol. I. p. 165, &c.

† *Vid. Cluv. lib. I. cap. vi, vii, viii, &c. Pellout. lib. I. chap. xv.*

era*. After all, there is probably a good deal of truth on both sides; I can readily believe that all the names of places and persons in ancient Germany, or such other countries as any of the Gothic or Teutonic nations at any time penetrated into, will be reducible to the language now spoken by their descendants: And that in like manner, from the Irish and Welsh languages, which may be allowed to be genuine daughters of the ancient Gallic or Celtic tongue †, it will be easy to explain such names as were imposed by any of the ancient Celtic or Gallic tribes. Indeed, in the very remote ages, prior to history, one cannot pretend to say what were the distinct bounds or limits of each people. They were, like all other barbarous nations, roving and unsettled, and often varied their situation; being sometimes spread over a country, at other times driven out by some stronger tribe of barbarians, or forsaking it themselves in search of new settlements. Cæsar informs us, that some of the Gallic tribes forced their way into Germany, and there established themselves ‡. It is equally probable, that, before his time, bands of Germans might at different periods, penetrate into Gaul §; where, although their numbers might be too small to preserve them a distinct nation, yet these emigrants might import many names of persons and places that would outlive the remembrance of their founders. This will sufficiently account for the dispersion of words derived from both languages, and inform us why Celtic derivations may be found in Germany, and German names discovered in Gaul. So much for arguments derived from Etymology; which are so very uncertain and precarious, that they can only amount to presumptions at best, and can never be opposed to solid positive proofs.

With regard to the other source of arguments, by which these learned writers support their opinion of the identity of the Gauls and Germans, viz. QUOTATIONS from the ancient Greek and Roman authors, these they have produced in great abundance. But even if it should be granted that the Greeks and Romans applied sometimes the names of Celtic, Scythian, or Hyperborean, indiscriminately to the ancient inhabitants of Germany and Gaul, of Britain and Scandinavia, the inference will still be doubted by those that consider how little
known

* See that excellent antiquary Llyud, in *Archæologia Britannica*, &c. not to mention many late writers of a different stamp, viz. Jones, Parsons, &c. &c.

† That the present Welsh language is the genuine daughter of the ancient British, spoken in the time of the Romans, cannot be disputed; because we have now extant MSS. writ in every age from the Roman times down to the present, which plainly prove the descent, and are not unintelligible to the present inhabitants of Wales. (See Evans's *Specimens of Welsh Poetry*, 4to.) Now, that the ancient British differed little from the Gaulish, we are assured by Tacitus. *Sermo haud multum diversus*. Tacit. Agric. c. ii.

‡ *Fuit antea tempus cum Germanos Galli virtute superarent et ultra bella inferrent*, &c. . . . *trans Rhenum colonias mitterent*, &c. Vid. *plura apud Cæs. de Bell. Gall. lib. vi.*

§ This Cæsar expressly tells us of the Belgæ, who were settled to the north of the Seine and the Marne. *Pleraque Belgas esse ortos à Germania; Rhenunque antiquitus transductos, propter loci fertilitatem ibi consedisse; Gallosque qui ea loca incollebant, expulisse*. De Bell. Gall. lib. ii.

known all these nations were to the early writers of Greece and Rome; who, giving them all the general name of Barbarians, inquired little farther about them, and took very little pains to be accurately informed about their peculiar differences and distinctions. Even a long time after these rude nations had begun to press upon the empire, and had made the Romans dread their valour, still their writers continued to have so confused and indistinct a knowledge of their different descent and character, as to confound both the Celts and Goths with the Sarmatians, whom all writers allow to have been a distinct nation from them both*: Thus Zosimus, an historian of the third century, includes them all under the common name of Scythians†; and this at a time when, after their long and frequent intercourse with the Romans, their historians ought to have been taught to distinguish them better.

However, the Greek and Roman authors were not all equally indistinct and confused on this subject. It will be shewn below, that some of their best and most discerning writers, when they had an opportunity of being well informed, knew how to distinguish them accurately enough: So that both Cluverius and Pelloutier have found themselves much puzzled how to reconcile such stubborn passages with their own favourite hypothesis, and have been entangled in great difficulties in endeavouring to get over the objections these occasion. Even with regard to the more early historians, they appear to have been sometimes more precise and accurate in their descriptions. There is a remarkable passage of this kind in Strabo‡; in which he informs us, that, although the old Greek authors gave all the northern nations the common name of Scythians, or Celtoscythians, yet that writers still more ancient §, divided all “the nations who lived beyond the Euxine, the Danube, and the Adriatic Sea, into the *Hyperboreans*, “the *Sauromata*, and *Arimaspians*; as they did those beyond the Caspian Sea into the *Sacæ* and *Massageta*.” These *Sacæ* and *Massageta* might possibly be the ancestors of the Saxons and the Goths, (as these last are fully proved to have been the *Getæ* of the ancients ||), who, in the time of those very remote Greek writers, possibly had not penetrated so far westward as they did afterwards: As it is well known that the *Germanii* are mentioned by Herodotus ¶ as a Persian people. Now the most authentic historians and poets of the Gothic or Teutonic nations all agree that their ancestors came at different emigrations from the more eastern countries**. But with regard to the

* See Pelloutier, vol. I. liv. I. ch. II. passim.

† See Pelloutier, vol. I. p. 17.

‡ Strabo, lib. xi. Ἀπείρας μὲν δὴ τοὺς Περσέωνος καὶ οἱ ἑταῖροι τῶν Ἑλλήνων συγγραφεῖς, Σκύθας καὶ Κελτοσκύθας καλοῦν, &c. Vid. Cluv. lib. I. p. 22. Pellout. vol. I. p. 2.

§ Οἱ δὲ ἙΤΙΛΙΠΟΤΕΡΟΝ διέλοντες, &c.

|| See Pelloutier, liv. I. ch. viii, vol. I. p. 46, 47, &c. notes.

¶ Herod. in Clio. Ἄλλοι δὲ Πέρσαι μοι οἶδε, Πανθηλιαῖοι, Δηρουσῖοι, ΓΕΡΜΑΝΙΟΙ. Edit. R. Steph. 1570. pag. 34.

** All the old northern scalds and historians agree that their ancestors came thither from the East; but then some of them, to do the greater honour to their country,

the three other nations, the Hyperboreans, the Sauromatae, and the Arimaspians, if we agree with Pelloutier *, that under the two former the Celts and Sarmatians are plainly designed, when he contends † that the Arimaspians are a meer fabulous people, which never existed, who does not see that he is blinded by hypothesis ! Why may not the ancient Finns or Laplanders have been intended by this term, which he himself interprets from Herodotus to signify *One-eyed*, and supposes it descriptive of some nation that excelled in archery, as alluding to their practice of winking with one eye in order to take aim ‡. Tacitus expressly assures us that the Fenni were great archers § ; and, as is observed in the following book ¶, it is highly probable, that, at some early period of time, both the Finns and Laplanders were possessed of much larger and better tracts of country than the northern deserts to which they are now confined.

But whether this interpretation be admitted or not, and whatever the more early Greek and Roman writers knew concerning the Celtic and Gothic nations, it is very certain, that, in latter times, such of them as had most discernment, and the best opportunities of being informed, have plainly and clearly delivered, that the Germans and Gauls were two distinct people, of different origin, manners, laws, religion, and language, and have accurately pointed out the difference between them.

Before we descend to particulars, it may be premised, that these two races of men were in many things alike, as would necessarily happen to two savage nations who lived nearly in the same climate, who were exposed to the same wants, and were obliged to relieve them by the same means. The more men approach to a state of wild and uncivilized life, the greater resemblance they will have in manners ; because savage nature, reduced almost to meer brutal instinct, is simple and uniform ; whereas art and refinement are infinitely various : Thus one of the rude natives of Nova Zembla will bear a strong resemblance in his manner of life to a savage of New Holland : They will both live upon fish and sea-fowls, because their desert shores afford no other food ; they will both be clad in the skins of seals

country, and to its antiquities, pretend that they first made an emigration into the East from Scandinavia. See Sheringham *De Anglorum Gentis Origine*. *Cartabrigie* 1670. 8vo. passim. It is the great fault of Sheringham, not to know how to distinguish what is true and credible, from what is improbable and fabulous, in the old Northern Chronicles : Because some parts are true, he receives all for authentic ; as a late ingenious writer, because some parts are fabulous, is for rejecting all as false ; (See Clarke, in his learned Treatise on the Connexion between the Roman, Saxon, and English Coins, &c. Lond. 1767. 4to.) By the same rule, we might reject the whole Grecian history : For that of the North has, like it, its *fabulous*, its *doubtful*, and more *certain periods* ; which acute and judicious critics will easily distinguish.

* Liv. l. chap. i.

† Vol. i. p. 9. 10.

‡ Pelloutier, *ibid.* Ἀρμασπιαὶ μετὰ τοὺς Ἰνδοὺς . . . ἈΡΙΜΑ γὰρ ἑστὶ καλῶς Σαρ-
ματῶν. ΣΠΟΥ δὲ τῶν Ὀρβηκῶν. Herod. p. 129. 145.

§ *Sola in sagittis ipse.* Tac. de Mor. Germ. cap. ult.

¶ Pag. 38, 39.

seals and other sea animals, because their country affords no other cloathing; and they will both live by fishing in little boats, and be armed with lances, pointed, for want of metal, either with sharp flints, or the bones of fishes: But will it therefore be inferred, that the inhabitants of these two opposite poles of the globe were originally one and the same people? The ancient Britons, in the time of Cæsar painted their bodies, as do the present Cherokees of North America; because it would naturally enough occur to the wild people of every country, that by this practice they might render themselves terrible to their enemies: Nor will this prove that the Cherokees are descended from the ancient Britons. When, therefore, Cluverius and Pelloutier solemnly inform us, That the Germans and Gauls lived both of them in small huts or caverns: That they subsisted either on venison slain in hunting, or on the milk and-cheese procured from their flocks: That both people led a wandering roving life, and equally disliked to live in cities, or follow agriculture, and of course ate little or no bread: That they both of them drank out of the horns of animals*, and either went naked, or threw a rude skin over their shoulders: When they collect a long series of such resemblances as these, and bring innumerable quotations from ancient authors to prove that all these descriptions are equally given of both people, who does not see that all these traits are found in every savage nation upon earth, and that by the same rule they might prove all the people that ever existed to be of one race and nation?

But notwithstanding these general resemblances, we have sufficient testimony from some of the most discerning ancient authors, that the Germans and Gauls, or, in other words, the Celtic and Teutonic nations, were sufficiently distinguished from each other, and differed considerably in *Person, Manners, Laws, Religion, and Language*.

Cæsar, whose judgment and penetration will be disputed by none but a person blinded by hypothesis†, and whose long residence in Gaul gave him better means of being informed than almost any of his countrymen; Cæsar expressly assures us, that the Celts, or common inhabitants of Gaul, “differed in Language, Customs, and Laws,” from the Belgæ, on the one hand, who were chiefly a Teutonic people‡, and from the inhabitants of Aquitain on the other; who, from
their

* Some of the ancient German tribes drank *Beer* and *Ale*, as did the old inhabitants of Gaul. (See Pelloutier, vol. I. lib. 2. cii. ii. p. 216, 217, &c.) This, however, proves them not to be the same people, any more than our drinking tea and coffee, proves us to be descended from the Chinese and Arabians.

† Cæsar is so much more precise and positive against the hypothesis espoused by Cluverius, Keyser, Pelloutier, &c. than the common Roman authors, who were generally inattentive to the differences of the barbarous nations, that all the writers above-mentioned set out with accusing Cæsar of being for ever mistaken; whereas he and Tacitus were probably the only Romans that were generally exact.

‡ *Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres: quarum unam incolunt Belgæ, aliam Aquitani, tertiam qui ipsorum lingua Celtae, nostra Galli appellantur. Hi omnes lingua, institutis, legibus inter se differunt.* Cæsar de Bello Gall. lib. 1.

Plerisque Belgas esse ortos a Germanis, &c. lb. lib. 2. (see above, page iv. note §.)

their vicinity to Spain, were probably of Iberian race. Cæsar positively affirms that the nations of Gaul differed from those of Germany in their Manners, and in many other particulars, which he has enumerated at length*: And this assertion is not thrown out at random, like the passages brought by Cluverius against it; but is coolly and cautiously made, when he is going to draw the characters of both nations at length, in an exact and well finished portrait, which shows him to have studied the genius and manners of both people with great attention, and to have been completely master of his subject†.

It is true, the Gauls and Germans resembled each other in Complexion, and perhaps in some other respects, as might be expected from their living under the same climate, and nearly in the same manner; yet that they differed sufficiently in their persons, appears from Tacitus, who says, that the inhabitants of Caledonia resembled the Germans in Features; whereas the Silures were rather like the Spaniards, as the inhabitants of South-Britain bore a great resemblance to the Gauls‡: This plainly proves that the Spaniards, Germans, and Gauls were universally known to differ in their Persons.

They differed also in *Manners and Customs*. To instance only in one point; among the Germans, the wife did not give a dowry to her husband, but the husband to the wife, as Tacitus expressly assures us§: Whereas we learn from Cæsar, that among the Gauls the husband received a portion in money with his wife, for which he made her a suitable settlement of his goods||, &c.

They differed no less in their *Institutions and Laws*. The Celtic nations do not appear to have had that equal plan of liberty, which
was

This testimony is precise and formal; but Cluverius and Pelloutier have found a similar passage in Strabo, in which he says of the *Aquitani*, that their language only differed a little from that of the other Gauls, *Εἰς αὐτοὺς ΜΙΚΡΟΝ παραλλαγήν ταις ἡλυσταῖς*. (Strab. initio lib. 4.) This I apprehend does not affect the difference between the Gauls and the Belgæ: i. e. the Celts and Goths, which is only the object of my present inquiry. (Vid. Cluv. p. 50. 52. Pellout. vol. i. p. 180.) After all, I much doubt whether the original inhabitants of Spain were of Celtic race: There is found no resemblance between the old Cantabrian language still spoken in Biscay, and any of the Celtic dialects, viz. the Welsh, Armoric, Irish, &c. (See the Specimens subjoined to this Preface.) I am therefore inclined to follow the ancient authorities collected by Pelloutier, (in vol. i. p. 27. note.) which affirm that the Iberians were a different people from the Celts; and that from an intermixture of the two nations were produced the Celtiberians. Pelloutier seems to me to have produced no convincing proofs to the contrary, though he has laboured the point much. As for the *Aquitani*, their intercourse with the other Gauls may have brought their language to a much nearer resemblance when Strabo wrote, than it had when Cæsar resided in Gaul.

* De Bello Gallico, lib. 6. Vide locum.

† See the passage in Cæsar, lib. 6. at large, as was too long to be inserted here.

‡ *Habitus corporum varii*: . . . *Rutilæ Calidoniam habitantium comæ, magni artus Germanicam originem asseverant. Silurum colorati vultus, et torti plerumque crines, et positi contra Hispaniam, Iberos veteres trajecisse easque sedes occupasse fidem faciunt. Proximi Gallis et similes sunt, &c.* Tacit. in Vit. Agricolæ, c. 11.

§ *Dotem non Uxor Marito, sed Uxori Maritus offert.* De Mor. Germ. c. 18.

|| *Viri quantas pecunias ab Uxoribus dotis nomine acceperunt, tantas ex suis bonis, æstimatione facta, cum dotibus communicant.* De Bello Gall. lib. 6.

was the peculiar honour of all the Gothic tribes, and which they carried with them, and planted wherever they formed settlements: On the contrary, in Gaul, all the freedom and power chiefly centered among the Druids and the chief men, whom Cæsar calls *Equites*, or Knights: But the inferior people were little better than in a state of slavery*; whereas every the meanest German was independent and free†.

But if none of these proofs of difference of Person, Manners, Institutions, or Laws, could have been produced, or should be explained away, still the difference was so great and essential between the Celtic and Teutonic nations, in regard to *Religion* and *Language*, as can never be got over, and plainly evince them to have been two distinct and different people. These two points are so strong and conclusive, that the whole proof might be left to rest upon them.

In comparing the Religious Establishment and Institutions of the Celtic tribes, with those of the Gothic or Teutonic nations, the most observable difference, and what strikes us at first sight, is, that peculiar Hierarchy, or Sacred College, among the Celts, which had the entire conduct of all their religious and even civil affairs, and served them both for magistrates and priests; viz. that of the *Druids*; which has nothing to resemble it among any of the Gothic or Teutonic nations‡. This difference appeared to Cæsar so striking, that he sets out with this at his entrance on his description of the Germans, as a fundamental and primary distinction§. I do not here enter into a minute description of the nature of the Druids' establishment, or an enumeration of their privileges, because these may be found in Cæsar and Pliny among the ancients, and in so many authors among the moderns¶: It will be sufficient to say, that, although the Teutonic nations

* In omni Gallia eorum hominum, qui aliquo sunt numero atque honore generâ sunt: nam Plebs parvè Servorum habetur loco. . . . De his duobus generibus alterum est Druidum, alterum Equitum, &c. De Bell. Gall. lib. 6.

† Tacitus de Mor. Germ. passim.

‡ Our Author, Mons. Mallet, thinks that the twelve Pontiffs, called *Drotter*, who were assistants to Odin in administering justice, (p. 53.) were a kind of Druids; and that their name, *Drotter*, has some affinity to the Celtic word *Druid* (p. 119.). This, however, is mere fancy; there appears no more connection between the functions or offices of these two orders of men, than there is between their names; That of *Druid* being generally derived from the Greek *Δρυς*, or rather from the Celtic *Druw*, or *Dru*, an Oak, their sacred Tree (Vid. Borlace, p. 67.) whereas the words *Drotter* and *Drotter* come from the Icelandic *Drotten*, *Dominus*, Swed. *Drott*, *Herod*.

§ Germani multum ab hâc consuetudine (sc. Gallorum) differunt: nam neque Druides habent, qui rebus Divinis præsent neque sacrificiis student, &c. De Bell. Gall. lib. 6.

¶ Vid. Cæsar. De Bell. Gall. Comment. lib. 6. Plinii Nat. Hist. lib. 16. c. 44. Of the moderns, see Toland's Specimen of a History of the Druids, in Miscell. Works, vol. 1st. 1747. 8vo. Stukely's Stonehenge, and Abury, 2 vols. 1740. 8cc. folio. But especially Dr. Borlace's Antiquities of Cornwall, 2d edit. 1769. folio. This learned and ingenious writer has left nothing to be desired on the subject of the *Druids* and their institutions: He has however been drawn in by Keyser, and the other German antiquaries, to adopt their hypothesis, that the religion of the ancient Germans was, in fundamentals, the same with that of the Gauls and Britains.

nations had Priests, they bore no more resemblance to the Druids, than the Pontiffs of the Greeks and Romans, or of any other Pagan people.

Not

tains, (vid. p. 71.) As nothing that falls from so excellent a writer ought to be disregarded, I shall consider his arguments with attention. He proves the identity of the German and Gaulish Religion from the conformity of the Germans and Gauls in the following points: viz. " (1.) The principal Deity of both nations was Mercury: (2.) They sacrificed human victims: (3.) They had open temples, and (4.) no idols of human shape: (5.) They had consecrated groves: (6.) Worshipped oaks: (7.) Were fond of auspicial rites: and (8.) Computed by nights, and not by days."

I shall consider each of these proofs in their order: And as for the *First*, that "both nations worshipped Mercury:" This amounts to no more than this, that the Gauls and Britons worshipped for their chief Deity, some Celtic God; which Cæsar finding to resemble in some of his attributes the Roman Mercury, scrupled not to call by that Roman name: So, again, the Germans worshipped for their supreme God, a Divinity of their own, whom Tacitus likewise called *Mercury*, from a fancied resemblance to that Roman Deity, perhaps in other of his attributes. We know very well, that the Supreme Deity of all the Teutonic nations was *Odin*, or *Woden*, called by the ancient Germans *Volam* and *Golam*, or *Godam*, (vid. not. in Tac. *Varior.* p. 602.), who seems chiefly to have resembled the Roman Mercury in having a particular power over the ghosts of the departed (Vide Bartholin. lib. 2. c. 7. *Odinus Manium fuit Dominus: Mercurio comparandus.*) In other respects, how much they differed will appear at first sight in the *Edda*. Now if the Celtic Mercury resembled the Roman no more than Odin did, we see how unlike they might be to each other. We are not even sure that these two *Mercuries* of the Gauls and Germans agreed with the *Mercury* of the Romans in the same points of resemblance.

But (2.) "Both nations sacrificed human victims: (3.) Had open Temples; (5.) "Consecrated Groves; and (7.) were fond of auspicial rites." These descriptions I believe may be applied to all the Pagan nations in the world, during their early barbarous state. For (2.) all Pagan nations have offered human victims: Have had (3.) open temples, before they got covered ones: And, previous to their erecting magnificent domes for their religious rites, have either set up circles of rude stones, or retired under the natural shelter of (5.) solemn groves, which, upon that account, they consecrated: And (7.) all Pagan people have dealt in omens, auspices, and all the other idle superstitions of that sort. There is not one of the above circumstances but what is mentioned in Scripture, as practised by the idolatrous nations which surrounded the Jewish people, and was equally observed by some or other of the inhabitants of Italy and Greece: So that the Germans resembled the Gauls with regard to these particulars no more than they did the old idolatrous inhabitants of Canaan, Assyria, Greece, and Italy. As for the Teutonic nations, they very soon got covered temples (see below, p. 108.), and also idols of human shape (p. 110.), as had indeed the Celtic nations also in the time of Cæsar; for so Dr. Borlace himself (p. 107.) interprets that passage of his concerning the Gauls (lib. 6.) *Drum maxime Mercurium colunt: Hujus sunt plurima simulacra.* If these *simulacra* had not been images, but only rude unformed stones, Cæsar would doubtless have expressed himself with more reserve. When, therefore, Dr. Borlace says that the Gauls and Germans resembled each other in having (4.) "No idols of human shape, he must only mean in their more early state of idolatry; which I suppose may also be predicated of every savage nation before they have attained any skill in sculpture.

But he says (6.) that both nations "worshipped Oaks." His proof, however, that the Germans had this superstition only, is, that "the *Sclavonians* (a people of Germany) worshipped Oaks, inclosed them with a court, and fenced them in, to keep off all unhalloed access;" and for this he refers to the note in Tacit. *Variorum* ad c. 9. where Helmodus has said, that the *Russians* held their groves and fountains sacred, and that the *Sclavi* worshipped Oaks. This proves nothing with regard to the Teutonic nations; but plainly shews that many of the Druidic superstitions had been caught up and adopted by nations no ways allied to the Celts; and therefore suggests an easy answer to the last proof that is urged of the resemblance of the Germans and Gauls in their religious rites and opinions; viz. that,

(8.) Both people "computed by nights, and not by days." This is in reality the only solid argument that has been produced. But to this the answer is very obvious,

Not only in the peculiar nature of their priesthood, but in their interhal doctrines, as well as outward rites, they differed.

The Druids taught, and the Celtic nations believed, the Metempsychosis, or a transmigration of the soul out of one body into another: This is so positively asserted of them by Cæsar*, who had been long conversant among them, and knew them well, that it is not in the power of any of the modern system-makers to argue and explain his words away, as they have attempted to do in every other point relating to the Celtic antiquities: However, they attempt to qualify it, by asserting that the Celtic nations believed only that the soul passed out of one human body into another, and never into that of brutes†: Which distinction I shall not now stay to examine, but proceed to observe, that all the Gothic and Teutonic nations held, on the contrary, a fixed Elizium, and a Hell; where the valiant and just were rewarded, and where the cowardly and the wicked suffered punishment. The description of these forms a great part of the Edda‡.

In innumerable other instances, the institutions of the Druids among the Celts were extremely different from those of the Gothic nations. To mention a few: The former frequently burnt a great quantity of human victims alive, in large wicker images, as an offering to their Gods§. The Gothic nations, though, like all other Pagans, they occasionally defiled their altars with human blood, appear never to have had any custom like this.

The Druids venerated the Oak and the Misseltœ, which latter was regarded by them as the most divine and salutary of plants||, and gathered with very particular ceremonies. In the Gothic mythology, if any tree seems to have been regarded with more particular attention than others, it is the Ash¶: And as for the Misseltœ, it is represented

vions. The Teutonic nations, it is allowed, had this very peculiar arbitrary custom, which they probably borrowed from their Celtic neighbours, although of a very different race, and professing, in the main, a very different religion: For if the Sclavonian tribes, whose situation lay so much more remote from the Celts, had adopted their superstitious veneration for the Oak, which seems in no degree to have infected the Germans, it would have been wonderful indeed, if the latter, who lay contiguous to the Celts, had picked up none of their opinions or practices.

* *In primis hoc volunt persuadere. Non interire animas, sed ab aliis post mortem transire ab aliis.* Lib. vi.—Vid. Diodor. Sicul. lib. v. c. 2. et Val. Max. lib. ii. c. 6. Ammian. Marcel. lib. xv.

† Vid. Keyser's Antiq. Sep. p. 117. Borlace, p. 98, 99, &c.

‡ It must not be concealed, that Bartholine has produced a passage from an ancient Ode in the Edda of Sæmund Frode, which plainly shews that the doctrine of the Transmigration was not wholly unknown to the Scandinavians; but Bartholine himself speaks of it as a single instance, and it appears from the passage itself, that the opinion was considered by the Scandinavians as an idle old wife's fable. Vid. Bartholin. Cause Contemp. a Danis Mortis, pag. 208. *Sigruna* (Helgonis Uxor) *dolore et meritis extincta est: Credebatur antiquitus homines iterum nasci, illud vero nunc pro anili errore habetur. Helgo et Sigruna iterum nati fuisse dicuntur; tunc ille Helgo Haddinga Skadi dicebatur; illa vero Kara, Halfdani filia.* It is probable, that in this one instance they only copied the doctrine of the Druids. As the Celtic nations preceded the Teutonic tribes in many of their settlements, it was probably by the former that this *anilis error antiquitus credebatur*, which was soon exploded among their Teutonic successors, whose established belief was very different.

§ Vid. Cæsar de Bello Gall. lib. vi. Borlace, p. 127.

|| See vol. II. p. 107. &c.

¶ See the Edda *passim*.

presented in the Edda rather as a contemptible and mischievous shrub*.

But what particularly distinguishes the Celtic institutions from those of the Gothic or Teutonic nations, is that remarkable air of Secrecy and Mystery with which the Druids concealed their doctrines from the laity; forbidding that they should ever be committed to writing, and upon that account not having so much as an alphabet of their own†. In this, the institutions of Odin and the Gothic Scalds was the very reverse. No barbarous people were so addicted to writing, as appears from the innumerable quantity of Runic inscriptions scattered all over the north; no barbarous people ever held Letters in higher reverence, ascribing the invention of them to their chief deity‡, and attributing to the letters themselves supernatural virtues§. Nor is there the least room to believe that any of their doctrines were locked up or concealed from any part of the community. On the contrary, their Mythology is for ever displayed in all the Songs of their Scalds, just as that of the Greeks and Romans is in the Odes of Pindar and Horace. There never existed any institution in which there appears less of reserve and mystery than in that of the Gothic and Scandinavian people.

After all, it may possibly be true, that the Gothic nations borrowed some opinions and practices from the Celts, without being at all descended from them; or having any pretensions to be considered as the same people. The Celtic tribes were probably the first that travelled westward, and it is not impossible but that several of the Druidic observances might be caught up and imitated by the other nations that came after them||. Some reliques of the Druidic superstitions, we have seen (p. x. Note 6.), prevailed among the Slavonians; and still more might be expected to be found among those of Gothic or Teutonic race, both from their nearer vicinage and greater intercourse with the Celtic nations, from whom the Sarmatians lay more remote. Nothing is more contagious than superstition; and therefore we must not wonder, if, in ages of ignorance, one wild people catch up from another, though of very different race, the most arbitrary and groundless opinions, or endeavour to imitate them in such rites and practices as they are told will recommend them to the Gods, or avert their anger.

Before I quit this subject of the Religion of the Celtic and Gothic nations, I must beg leave to observe, that the Mythology of the latter was probably, in the time of Cæsar and Tacitus, a very crude and naked

* See vol. II. p. 104, 106, &c.

† *Neque fas esse existimant ea litteris mandare; cum in reliquis fere rebus, publicis privatisque rationibus, Græcis literis utantur.* . . . *Neque in vulgari Disciplina fieri vult.* Cæsar, lib. vi.

‡ Vid. infra, p. 60, 812, 313, &c.

§ Vid. infra, p. 314, 315, &c.

|| See what has been said above, p. x. Note (8.). I know not whether we are to attribute to imitation the practice that prevailed among both people, of burying their dead under Barrows, or Tumuli (see p. 187.). This mode of sepulture, however, makes a great figure in all the old Northern Sagas or Histories, as well as in the Songs of the Scalds.

naked thing, compared to what it was afterwards, when the northern Scalds had time to flourish and adorn it. From a very few rude and simple tenets, these wild fables had, in the course of eight or nine centuries, invented and raised an amazing superstructure of fiction. We must not therefore suppose, that all the fables of the Edda were equally known to the Gothic nations of every age and tribe. As truth is uniform and simple, so error is most irregular and various; and it is very possible, that different fables, and different observances, might prevail among the same people, in different times and countries. From their imperfect knowledge of the divine attributes, all Pagan nations are extremely apt to intermix something *local* with their idea of the Divinity, to suppose peculiar Deities presiding over certain districts, and to worship this or that God with particular rites, which were only to be observed in one certain spot. Hence, to inattentive foreigners, there might appear a difference of religion among nations who all maintained, at the bottom, one common creed; and this will account for whatever disagreement is remarked between Cæsar and Tacitus in their descriptions of the Gods of the ancient Germans: It will also account for whatever difference may appear between the imperfect relations of the Roman writers, and the full display of the Gothic mythology held forth in the Edda. It is indeed very probable, that only the more first rudiments of the Gothic religion had begun to be formed, when the Germans were first known to the Romans: And even when the Saxons made their irruptions into Britain, though they had the same general belief concerning Odin, or Woden, Thor, and Frigga, &c. yet probably the complete system had not arrived to the full maturity it afterwards attained under the inventive hands of the Scalds.

The essential difference remarked above, between the religion of the Celtic and Gothic nations, in their Tenets, Institutions, and Worship, affords a strong proof that they were two races of men *ab origine* distinct: The same truth is proved still more strongly, if possible, by their difference in *Language*; this is an argument of fact, that amounts, in questions of this nature, almost to demonstration.

Tacitus assures us *, that the ancient British language was very little different from that spoken in Gaul; *Sermo haud multum diversus*: There was probably no more than a small difference in dialect. But that the Gaulish language widely differed from that of the Germans, appears from the whole current of history. Thus Cæsar not only asserts, in the passage above, quoted (pag. vii. Note †), that the Gauls differed in language from the Belgæ, but plainly shews that the German and Gaulish languages were very different, when he tells us, that Ariovistus, a German prince, only learnt to speak the latter by his long residence in Gaul ‡. Again, Suetonius tells us, that Caligula, returning from his fruitless expedition against the Germans, in order

* See above, p. iv. Note †.

† *Quæ multa sara. Ariovistus longinquæ consuetudine utebatur.* De Bell. Gall. lib. I. c. 47.

to grace his triumph with an appearance of prisoners of that nation, for want of real Germans, chose from among the Gauls such as were of very tall stature, whom he caused to let their hair grow long, and to colour it red. to learn the German language, and to adopt German names; and thus he passed them off for prisoners from Germany*. These, and other proofs from Tacitus, are produced by Pelloutier himself, though he afterwards endeavours to obviate their force, by pretending that the languages of Gaul and Germany differed only in dialect†, &c. But that they were radically and essentially different, will appear, beyond contradiction, to any one that will but use his eyes, and compare any of the living languages which are descended from these two ancient tongues. This question receives so clear, so full, and so easy a solution, by barely inspecting such of the languages of Celtic and Gothic origin as are now extant, that, to conclude the inquiry, I shall only lay before the reader Specimens of them both.

That the languages now spoken in Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, and England, are all derived from, or allied to, the ancient German, no one can deny; because the words are visibly the same in them all, only differing in dialect. On the other hand, that the ancient British was a language very little different from that of the Gauls, we have the express testimony of Tacitus, above-mentioned. Let us now compare the several dialects of the ancient British, viz. the Welsh‡, the Armoric, and the Cornish, and see whether they contain the most distant resemblance to any of the Teutonic dialects above-mentioned.

Whoever looks into the following Specimens, will observe, that the modern English and German are two languages evidently derived from one common source; almost all the words in both being radically the same; and yet it is near 1200 years since the English language was transplanted out of Germany, and cut off from all intercourse with the mother tongue. In the mean time, the people who have spoke it have undergone amazing revolutions and changes in their government, religion, laws, and manners, and their language, in particular, has been subject to more than common innovations. On the other hand, let him compare the same English specimen with that of the Welsh language, and see if he can discover the most distant resemblance between them: and yet both these are spoken upon the same island, and that by fellow citizens, who, for many hundred years, have been subjects to the same prince, governed by the same laws, have professed the same religion, and adopted nearly the same system

* Sueton. Caligula. c. 47.

† Pellout. vol. I. liv. I. ch. xxv.

‡ That the present Welsh language is the genuine daughter of the ancient British, see proved (if it needs any proof) in Rowland's *Mona Antiqua restaurata*, 2d. edit. 1766. 4to. § iv. p. 35. &c. See also above, p. iv. note †.

See likewise in Camden's *Britannia*, his Essay *De primis Incolis*, &c. where that great Antiquary shows the immediate descent of the present Welsh nation from the ancient Britons, and their near affinity to the old inhabitants of Gaul; but especially proves, by innumerable instances, the strong connection between their several languages.

system of manners: and now at last, after all this intercourse, what two languages can be more unlike? Can this radical dissimilitude be called only a difference in dialect? During the rude ages prior to history, before the Britons or Germans were invaded by other nations, or had adopted any foreign refinements, while both people were under the uninterrupted influence of their original institutions, customs, and manners, no reason can be assigned why their language should undergo any material alterations. A savage people, wholly occupied by their present animal wants, aim at no mental or moral improvements, and are subject to no considerable changes. In this state, their language being affected by none of the causes that commonly introduce very great innovations, will continue for many ages nearly the same. The great causes that introduce the most considerable changes in language are, invasions of foreigners, violent alterations in religion and laws, great improvements in literature, or refinements in manners. None of these, so far as we know, had happened either to the Germans or Britons before the time of Cæsar, and yet even then there appeared no resemblance between the languages of these two people. On the other hand, all these causes have been operating with combined force ever since, and yet no considerable resemblance has obtained between the languages of England and Wales; nor has the radical affinity between those of England and Germany been effaced or destroyed. Upon what grounds then can it be pretended, that the ancient languages of Gaul and Germany flowed from one common source? Or who will believe so improbable a fact?

M. Pelloutier tells us*, that "it having been pretended that the "ancient Celtic is preserved to this day in the languages of Wales "and Brittany in France, he had looked into a few Glossaries of the "Welsh and Armoric tongues†, and had indeed discovered that *several* words of the ancient Celtic were, in effect, preserved in those "tongues." But he plainly hints, that he could not consider the bulk of the language as there perpetuated; and, indeed, considering how thick a film the prejudice of system had drawn over his eyes, it is a wonder he could discover any Celtic words at all: For he, taking it for granted that the High-Dutch language was the genuine Celtic, only

* Hist. des Celtes, vol. I. p. 155.

† The Armoric language, now spoken in Brittany in France, is a dialect of the Welsh; that province being peopled with a colony from Brittany in the 4th century; and though the two people have been separated so many ages, and have been subject to two nations so different in their laws, religion, and manners, still the two languages contain so strong a resemblance, that in our late conquest of Bellisle, such of our soldiers as came out of Wales were easily understood by the country people, and, with their Welsh language, served for interpreters to the other soldiers who only spoke English. This is a fact related to the Editor by a person who was there. Perhaps, upon comparing the Specimens subjoined, the two dialects may appear to the eye more remote from each other than the above relation supposes; but it may be observed, that their orthography not having been settled in concert, the same sound may have been expressed by very different combinations of letters, and the other differences may be only those of idiom; so that the two languages, when spoken, may have a much greater resemblance than appears upon paper to a person ignorant of them both. To give one instance: the Welsh word *Drwg*, and the Armoric *Drouc*, (Eng. *Evil*), though so differently written, are in sound no further distant than *Dröog* and *Drook*, the vowels in both being pronounced exactly alike.

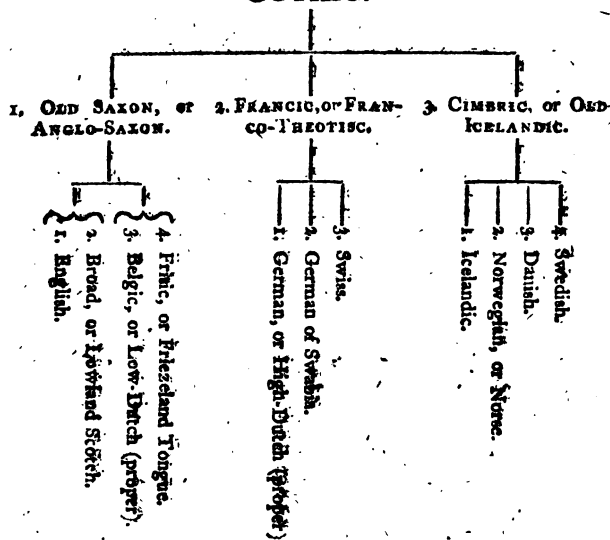
only looked for such words as bore any resemblance to that tongue; and there being, as indeed there are, very few that have any similitude, no wonder that he found so few Celtic words in a genuine Celtic language*.

I shall now proceed to lay before the Reader SPECIMENS of the **GOthic** and **Celtic** Languages, properly classed and confronted with each other: Which, it is apprehended, will decide this question better than any conjectural or moral reasoning.

That

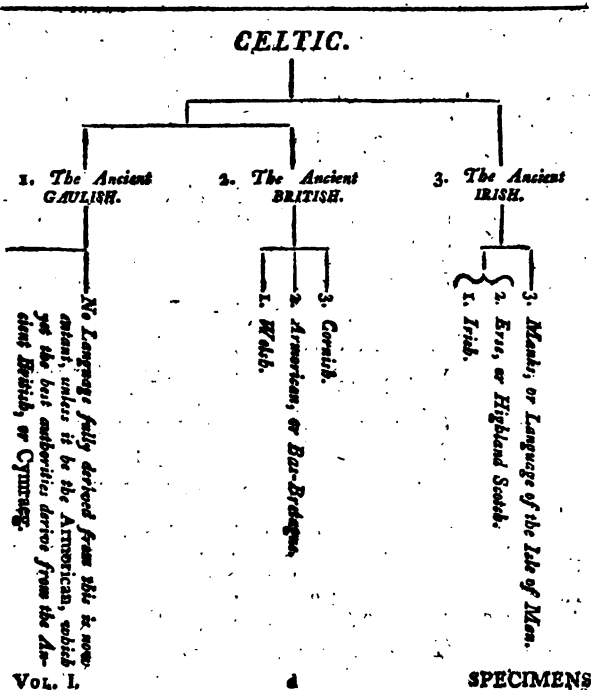
* It is much to be lamented, that a writer of so much learning, sagacity, and diligence as Mons. Pelloutier, should have spoiled, by an unfortunate hypothesis, so excellent a work as his *History of the Celts*, after all, certainly is. Had he not been drawn into this fundamental error, which infects his whole book; but, on the contrary, had been apprized of the radical distinction between the *Gothic* and *Celtic* antiquities; had he assigned to each people the several descriptions which occur of them in ancient history; had he pointed out the distinct features of their respective characters, and shewn in what particulars they both agreed, and wherein they differed; had he endeavoured to ascertain the limits of each people in ancient Europe,

GOthic.



That the *Systeme* may be the better understood, it will be useful to give a short *GENEALOGICAL TABLE*, showing what particular Languages are descended from those two great Mother Tongues, by what immediate Branches they derive their descent, and what degree of affinity they severally bear to each other. This scheme of the *GOthic Languages* is copied from the Preface to Dr *HICKES's Institutes Grammaticæ Anglo-Saxonice, &c.* *Onan.* 1689. 4to.: This of the *CELTIC* Tongue, from the best writers I have met with on the subject.

Europe, and shewn by which of them the several countries were formerly inhabited, and from which of them the modern nations are chiefly descended; he would then have performed a noble task, and have deserved equally well of the past and future ages: His book, instead of being a perpetual source of mistake and confusion, would then have served as a clue to guide us through the labyrinth of ancient history, and he would have raised a noble monument to the memory alike of the *Celts* and *Goths*, from one or other of which ancient people so many great nations are descended.



SPECIMENS OF THE GOTHIC LANGUAGES:

The ancient GOTHIC of ULPHILAS*.

Atta unsar thu in Himinam. 1. Veihpai Namo thein. 2. Quimai thiudinassus theins. 3. Vairthai Vilja theins, sue in Himina, jah ana Airthai. 4. Hlaif unsarana thana sinteinan gif uns himmadaga. 5. Jah aflet uns thatei Sculans sijaima sua sue jah veis afletam thaim Skulam unsaraim. 6. Jah ni bringais uns in Fraistubnjai. 7. Ak lausci uns af thamma Ubilin. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn's *Oratio Dominica in diversis omnium fere Gentium Linguis versa*, &c. *Amst.* 1715. 4to. p. 63. and from *Sacrorum Evangeliorum Versio Gothica* Ed. Edqv. Lye. *Oxon.* 1750. 8to. p. 9.]

THE ANCIENT LANGUAGES derived from the GOTHIC.

I.

ANGLO-SAXON.

Uren Fader, thic arth in Heofnas. 1. Sie gehalgud thin Nama. 2. To cymeth thin Ryc. 3. Sie thin Willa sue is in Heofnas, and in Eorþo. 4. Uren Hlaf oferwistic sel us to daeg. 5. And forgefe us Scylda urna, sue we forgefan Scyldgum u-rum. 6. And no in-lead usig in Custnung. 7. Ab gefrig usich from ifle. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 56.]

II.

FRANCO-THÉOTISC.

Faterunsar thu thar bist in Himile. 1. Si gehenlagot thin Nama. 2. Queme thin Rihhi. 3. Si thin Willo, so her in Himile ist o si her in Erdu. 4. Unsar Brot tagalihhaz gib uns hrita. 5. Inti furlaz uns nusara Sculdi so uuir furlazames unsaron Sculdigon. 6. Inti ni gileit-est unsih in Costunga. 7. Uzouh arlosi unsi fon Ubile. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 61.]

III.

CIMBRIC, or Old ICE-
LANDIC.

Fader uor, som est i Himlum. 1. Halgad warde thitt Nama. 2. Tilkomme thitt Rikie. 3. Skie thin Vilie, so som i Himmalam, so och po Iordanné. 4. Wort dachliche Brodh gif os i dagh. 5. Ogh forlat os uora skuldar, so som ogh vi forlate them os Skildighe are. 6. Ogh inled os ikkie i Frestalsan. 7. Utan frels os ifra Ondr. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 54.]

I. MODERN LANGUAGES derived from the OLD SAXON.

I.

ENGLISH.

Our Father, which art in Heaven. 1. Hallowed be thy Name. 2. Thy kingdom come. 3. Thy Will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven. 4. Give us this day our daily bread. 5. And forgive us

II.

BROAD SCOTCH.

Ure Fadir, whilk art in Hevin. 1. Hallout be thy Naim. 2. Thy Kingdum cum. 3. Thy Will be dun in Airth, as it is in Hevin. 4. Gie us this day ure daily Breid. 5. And forgie us ure debts, ass

* This is also called *Moeso-Gothic*, being the Dialect of the Goths in Moesia, where Ulpilas was Bishop. See below, p. 308.

SPECIMENS OF THE CELTIC LANGUAGES.

I am not able to produce any Specimen of the CELTIC, at least any version of the Lord's Prayer, which can be opposed in point of antiquity to the GOTHIC Specimen from ULPHILAC, who flourished A.D. 365.—As the Celts were settled in these countries long before the GOTHs, and were exposed to various revolutions before their arrival, their language has, as might be expected, undergone greater and earlier changes than the GOTHIC; so that no specimen of the old original CELTIC is, I believe, now to be found.

The ANCIENT LANGUAGES derived from the CELTIC.

I.	II.	III.
[ANCIENT GAULISH:	CAMBRIAN, OR ANCIENT BRITISH.	ANCIENT IRISH, OR GAEDHLIG.
Of this Language I cannot find any Specimen to be depended on.	<i>Eyen Ta id rhwun wyt yn y Neofododd.</i> <i>1. Santeiddier yr Hen-ou tan. 2. Devedy dyrnas dau. 3. Gweler dy Wollys ar ryddayr megis ag yn y Nef. 4. Eyn Bara beunydduwl dyro inni beddieu. 5. Ammadden yny cyn dyledion, megis ag i maddewu in dyleduoir ni-naw. 6. Agna thowys, ni in brofedigaeth. 7. Namyn gwared ni rbeg Drug. Amen.</i>	<i>Our? Narme ata ar Neamb. 1. Beanich a Tuinin. 2. Go diga de Riogda. 3. Go denta du Hoill' air Talm in marte ar Neamb. 4. Tabair deim uniugb ar Naran limbali. 5. Augus mai duin ar Fiach ambail maambid ar fiacha. 6. Na leig sin amaribb. 7. Ach sarsa sip o Ole. Amen.</i>

[From Chamberlayn, p. 47.]

[From Dr Anthony Raymond's Introduction to the History of Ireland, p. 2, 3, &c.]

II. MODERN LANGUAGES derived from the ANCIENT BRITISH, OR CYMRAEG.

I.
WELSH, OR CYMRAEG.

Ein Tâd, yr brwn wyt yn y Nefoedd. 1. Sancteiddier dy Enw 2. Deved dy Deyrnas. 3. Bydded dy Ennylls ar y Ddaiar megis y mae yn y Nefoedd. 4. Dyro i ni Heddyw ein Bara trunydduwl. 5. A modde inni ein Dyledion fel y maddewu ni i'n Dy-

* The above Specimen of the ancient Irish is judged to be a thousand years old. See O'Connors's Dissertation on the History of Ireland. Dublin, 1766. 8vo.

SPECIMENS OF THE GOTHIC LANGUAGES.

our Debts as we forgive our Debtors. 6. And lead us not into Temptation. 7. But deliver us from Evil. Amen.

[From the English Testament.]

III.

LOW-DUTCH, or BELGIC.

Onse Vader die daer zijt in de Hemelen. 1. Uwen Naem worde gheheylight. 2. U Rijke kome. 3. Uwen Wille gheschiede op der Aerden, gelijk in den Hemel. 4. Onse dagelijckt Broodt gheeft ons heden. 5. Ende vergeeft ons onse Schulden, ghelijck wy oock onse Schuldenaren vergeven. 6. Endo en leyt ons niet in Versoeking. 7. Maer verlost ons vanden Boosen. Amen.

[From the New Test. in Dutch, Amst. 1630, 12mo.]

IV.

FRISC, or Friezeland Tongue.

Ws Haita duu derstu biste yne Hymil. 1. Dyn Name wird heiligt. 2. Dyn Rick tokomme. 3. Dyn Wille moet schoen, opt Yrt-ryck as yne Hymile. 4. Ws delix Bræ jov ws jwed. 5. In verjou ws, ws Schylden, as wy vejac ws Schyldnira. 6. In liêd ws nact in Versieking. 7. Din fry ws vin it Quæd. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn; p. 68.]

II. MODERN LANGUAGES derived from the ANCIENT GERMAN, or FRANCIC, &c.

I.

HIGH-DUTCH (proper).

Unser Vater in dem Himmel. 1. Dein Name werde geheiligt. 2. Dein Reich komme. 3. Dein Wille geschehe auf Erden, wie im Himmel. 4. Unser taeglich Brodt gib uns heute. 5. Und vergib uns unsere Schulden, wie wir unsern Schuldigern vergeben. 6. Und fuehre uns nicht in Versuchung. 7. Sondern erloese uns von dem Vbel. Amen.

[From the common German New Testament, printed at London. 12mo.]

II.

HIGH-DUTCH of the SUEVIAN Dialect.

Fatter ausar dear du bischt em Hemmal. 1. Gehoyliget wearde dain Nam. 2. Zuakomme dain Reyck. 3. Dain Will gschea uff Earda as em Hemmal. 4. Ausar deglich Braud gib as huyt. 5. Und fergiab as ausre Schulda, wia wiar fergeaba ausarn Schuldigearn. 6. Und fuar as net ind Fersuaching. 7. Sondern erlais as fom Ibal. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn's Oratio Dominica, p. 64.]

III.

The Swiss Language.

Vatter unser, der du bist in Him-
len. 1. Gheylight werd dyn Nam.

SPECIMENS OF THE CELTIC LANGUAGE.

*ledwyr. 6. Ag nag arwain ni i Brosfath-
gath. 7. Eilbr gwared ni rhag Drwg.
Amen.*

[Communicated by a Gentleman of Jesus College
Oxon.]

II.

ARMORIC, or Language of Brit-
tany in France.

*Hon Tad, pebadij sou en Eisan. 1. Da Hanou bezet sanctifet. 2. Deuet aornomp da rouantelaer. 3. Da col bezet graet en Douar, eual maz con en Euf. 4. R6 dimp byziou bon Bura pendenlec. 5. Pardon dimp bon pebedon, eual na pardo-
nomp da nep pegant ex-nip offancet. 6. Ha na dilas quet a hanomp en
Temptation. 7. Hogueu bon dilue
diour Drouc. Amen.*

[From Chamberlayn, p. 51.]

III.

CORNISH.

*Ny Tan, ez yn Neau. 1. Bone-
gas yw tha Hanaw. 2. Tba bon-
gath bogweez en nore pocoragen Neau. 4. Roe ibenyen dythma gon dyth Ba-
ra givians. 5. Ny gen rahn weery
cava ny givians men. 6. O cabin
ledia ny nara ida Temiation. 7. Buz
dilver ny thart Drog. Amen.*

[From Chamberlayn, p. 50.]

III. MODERN LANGUAGES derived from the ANCIENT IRISH.

I.

IRISH, or GAIDHLIG.

*Ar nathair atá ar Neamb. 1. Naomhbar Hainm. 2. Tigeadh do
Rioghachd. 3. Deantair do Tboil ar
an Tálamb, mar de nithear ar
Neamb. 4. Ar narán luathambail
tabhair dhéinn ar Bhfacha, mar
mbaitbuidne dar bhfeithbeambhuibh
fein. 6. Agus na léig sinn a ceath-
ngebh. 7. Ach saor sinn o Olc.
Amen.*

[From Bishop Bede's Irish Bible. Lond.
1690. 8vo.]

II.

ERSE, or GAIDHLIG ALBANN-
AICH.

*Ar a' Albair ata air Neamb. 1. Gu naombaichear t Ainm. 2. Tig-
eadh do Rioghachd. 3. Deantair do
Tboil air an Tálamb mar a nithear
air Neamb. 4. Tabhair dhuinn an
diu ar a Aran laitheil. 5. Agus
maith dhuinn ar Fiach ambuil mar
mbaitbuid d'ar luibh fachaibh*. 6.
Agus na leig am buaireadh sinn. 7.
Ach saor sinn o Olc. Amen.*

* Feichneinibh.

[From the New Testament in the Erse
Language, printed at Edinburgh, 1767.
8vo. Mat. vi. 9.]

III.

MARKS, or Language of the ISLE of
MANN.

*Ayr ain, t'ayn Niau; 1. Casberick
dy row dt' Ennym. 2. Dy jig dy Res-*

SPECIMENS OF THE GOTHIC LANGUAGES.

2. Zikumun uns dijn Rīch. 3. Dya Will geschahē, wie im Himmel, also auch uff Erden. 4. Gib uns hūt unser taglich Brot. 5. Und vergib uns unsere Schulden, wie auch wir vergaben unsern Schuldneren. 6. Und fuhr uns nicht in Versuchnyss. 7. Spander erlos uns von dem Bosen. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 65.]

III. MODERN LANGUAGES derived from the ANCIENT SCANDINAVIAN, or ICELANDIC, called (by some Writers) CIMERIC, or CIMERO-GOTHIC.

I.

ICELANDIC.

Fader vor thu som ert a Himnum. 1. Helgest thitt Nafn. 2. Tilkomē thitt Rīike. 3. Verde thinn Vilie, so a Jordu, sem a Himne. 4. Gieff thu oss i dag vort daglegt Braud. 5. Og fiergieff oss vorar Skulder, so sem vier fierergiefum vorum Skuldinautum. 6. Og inleid oss ecke i Freistne. 7. Heldr frelsa thu oss fra Illu. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 70.]

III.

DANISH.

Vor Fader i Himmelen. 1. Helligt vorde dit Navn. 2. Tilkomme dit Rige. 3. Vorde din Villie, paa Iorden som i Himmelen. 4. Giff oss i Dag vort daglige Bred. 5. Oc forlad oss vor Skyld, som wi forlade vore Skyldener. 6. Oc leede oss icke i Fristelse. 7. Men frels os fra Ont. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 70.]

II.

NORWEGIAN, or NORSE.

Wor Fader du som est y Himmelen. 1. Gehailiget worde dit Nafn. 2. Tilkomma os Riga dit. 3. Din Wilia geskia paa Iorden, som handt er udi Himmelen. 4. Giff os y Tag wort dagliga Brousta. 5. Och forlaet os wort Skioldt, som wy forlata wora Skioldor. 6. Och lad os icke homma voi Fristelse. 7. Man frals os fra Onet. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 71.]

IV.

SWEDISH.

Fader war som ast i Himmelen. 1. Helgat warde titt Nampn. 2. Till komme tit Ricke. 3. Skei tin Wilie saa paa Iordenne, som i Himmelen. 4. Wart dagliga Brod giff oss i Dag. 5. Och forlat oss wara Skulder sa som ock wi forlaten them oss Skildege aro. 6. Och inleed oss icke i Frstelse. 7. Ut an frals oss i fra Ondo. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn p. 70.]

SPECIMENS OF THE CELTIC LANGUAGES.

*riaght. 3. Di' aigney dy reyn jaont er y
Thaloo, myr te ayns Niau. 4. Cur
dooin nyn Arran jcu az gagbla. 5.
As leib dooin nyn loghtyn, myr ta shin
leib dauersyn ta jannoo loghtyn nyn' oc.
6. As ey leiid shin' ayns miolagb. 7.
Agb liurty shin vaib Olk! Amen.*

[From the Liturgy in Manks, printed at
London, 1765. 8vo.]

SPECIMENS OF THE FINN AND LAPLAND TONGUES.

I.

The FINN Language.

*Iso meidan joca olet tairwassa. 1.
Pybitetty olcon sinum Nimes. 2. La-
hes tylen; sinum Waldacundas. 3.
Olcon sinun tabtas niin maasa cwin
tairwasa. 4. Anna meile sanapai-
wana meidan joca paitwatnen leipam.
5. Sa anqa meille meidan syndim an-
dexi nuncuin mekin andex annam mei-
dan welwottistem. 6. Ja ala job-
data meita kinsauxen. 7. Mutta
paasta meita pabasta. Amen.*

[From Chamberlayn, p. 82.]

II.

The LAPLAND Tongue.

*Aitki mijam juco lee almenisime
1. Ailis xiaddai tu Nam. 2. Zwei-
gubatta tu Ryki. 3. Ziaddus tu
Willio naukuchte almesne nau ei edna
mannal. 4. Wadde mijai udni mir-
jan fert pæstwen laibem. 5. Jap
andagasloite mi jemijan suddoid, nau-
kuchte miije andagasloitebt kudi miije
welgogas lien. 6. Jap sissalaiddi
mijabni. 7. Æle tocho kacknalleb-
ma pabast. Amen.*

[From Chamberlayn, p. 83.]

A SPECIMEN OF THE CANTABRIAN OR BISCAYAN
LANGUAGE, STILL PRESERVED IN SPAIN.

THE BASQUE.

*Gure Aita heruñan carēna. 1. Era-
lilbedi sainduqui gure Jcena. 2. Eibor-
bedi gure Erreusuma. 3. Eguinbedi
gure Borondatea foru' an beala, turre'
an ore. 4. Emandiepgaucu egun gure
egunoroxco oguia. 5. Eta barkbadiet-
patgutcu gure forrac guere gure curda-
nei barkbatcendiotpaguten becala. 6.
Eta engaitcaten uti tentacionetan erort-
acrat. 7. Aitcitic begutragaitcatcu gaitte
gucietatic. Halabez.*

[From Chamberlayn, p. 44.]

REMARKS ON THE FOREGOING VERSIONS: AND FIRST OF THE GOTHIC SPECIMENS.

THE great and uniform similitude discoverable at first sight between all the Specimens of the Gothic or Teutonic Languages, must be very striking; even to foreigners unacquainted with these Tongues: But to those that know them intimately, the affinity must appear much nearer and stronger; because many words that were originally the same, are disguised by the variations of Pronunciation and Orthography; as well as by the difference of Idiom: Thus, the German *Gebillet*, and the English *Hallowed*, are both equally derived from the Teutonic *Helig*. Holy.

It may further be observed, that Time has introduced a change, not only in the Form, but in the meaning of many words; so that though they are equally preserved in the different Dialects, they no longer retain the same uniform appearance, nor can be used with propriety to express the same exact meaning. Thus, the Latin word *Panis* is translated in the Gothic and Anglo-Saxon *Hlaf*, or *Hlaif*, which word is still current among us in its derivative *Loaf*, but with a variation of sense that made it less proper to be used in the Pater-noster than the other Teutonic word *Bread*, which is preserved in all the other Dialects, but in a great variety of Forms. Thus, from the old Francic *Brot*, or Cimbric *Brodt*, come the Swiss *Brot*, the Swedish *Brod*, the High and Low Dutch *Broodt*, the Norse *Bræuta*, the Icelandic *Braud*, the English *Bread*, the Scottish *Breid*, the Danish *Brod*, and the Frisic *Bra*.

Again, it is possible, that in many of these languages there was more than one word to express the same idea; and if there was a variety, then the different translators, by using some of them one word, and the rest another, have introduced a greater difference into their versions than really subsisted in their several languages. Of this kind I esteem the word *Atta*, (*Pater*), used by Ulphilas, whose countrymen had probably another word of the same origin as *Fader*, or *Father*, as well as all the other Gothic nations: So, again, the Anglo-Saxons (besides their word *Hlaf*) had probably another term, whence we derived our present word *Bread*. As for the Gothic word *Atta* (whence the Frisic *Haita*, and perhaps the Lapland *Aiti*), however Ulphilas came by it, it seems evidently of the same origin as the old Cantabrian *Atta*.

Lastly, a great difference will appear to Foreigners from the different arrangement of the same words, but more especially from the difference of Translation; for the Pater-noster has not been rendered in the several versions in the same uniform manner. Thus, in the High Dutch and Danish, the first sentence is expressed contractedly, *Noster Pater in Celis*. In the Gothic of Ulphilas, *Pater Noster tu in Celis*.

Celis. In the others more at large, *Pater Noster tu es in Celis, or Noster Pater qui es in Celis, &c. &c.* And what is still more remarkable in the Anglo-Saxon, the fourth petition is rendered, not *panem nostrum quotidianum*, but *panem nostrum supernaturalem*, as it was interpreted also by some of the ancient Fathers.

But to confirm the foregoing remarks by one general illustration, I shall confront the HIGH DUTCH Specimen with a literal ENGLISH version, which will support the assertion made above (p. 14.), that these two languages still prove their affinity, notwithstanding the different mediums through which they have descended, and the many ages that have elapsed since their separation.

GERMAN.

Unser
Vater

in dem Himmel.

1. Dein Name
werde geheiligt.
2. Dein Reich
komme.
3. Dein Wille
geschehe
auf Erden,
wie in Himmel.
4. Unser täglich Brodt
gib uns
heute †.
5. Und vergib

uns unsere
Schulden,
wie wir unsern
Schuldigern
vergeben.

ENGLISH.

Our [Ure, *Northern Dialect*]
Father [Vather, *Vader, Somersetshire Dialect*]

in the Heaven [in them Heavens,
vulgar Dialect.]

1. Thine Name
were [may it be] hallowed.
2. Thine [Kingdom †]
come.
3. Thine Will
so be
of [in] Earth,
as in Heaven.
4. Our daily Bread
give us
[this Day].
5. And forgive [forgive, *Somersetshire Dialect*]

us our
[Debts, *Debta, Lat.*]
as we our [ou'rn, *rustic Dialect.*]
[Debtors, *Debtores, Lat.*]
forgive. [forgiven, *Somersetshire Dialect.*]

6. Und

* This is evidently a contraction of *Unser*, antiph. *Unser*, ac. *Ues*, *Ure*. In our midland counties, *Our* is pronounced *Uer* or *Wer*, like the Swedish or Norse.

† The Swiss, and some of the other German Dialects, give the first sentence more fully, thus, *Du bist in Himlen*: This is literally the same with our vulgar phrase, *Thou beest, or bist in Heaven*.

‡ The old Teutonic word *Rich* is still preserved in the translation of our English *Bishop-rick*; and even *King-rick*, for *Kingdom*, was in use among our countrymen so late as the reign of Queen Elizabeth: Thus, in the famous libel of *Studs*, intitled, "The Discoverie of a gaping Gulf, wherunto England is like to be swallowed by another French Marriage," &c. printed Anno 1573. small 8vo. (Sign. C. 7. b.) The author talks of the Queen's "having the Kingrike in her own person;" meaning the regal dominion, authority, &c. See also Verstigan's Antiquities, Lond. 1694. p. 228.

§ Perhaps from the Lat. *hodie*.

6. Und fæhre
uns nicht in
Verſuchung.
7. Sondern
erlöſe uns
von dem Ubel.

6. And [lead]
us not in [into]
[Temptation, Lat.]
7. But
loose [deliver, French] us
from the Evil.

Before I quit this subject of the GOTHIC or TRUTONIC Languages, I must observe, that the old Scandinavian Tongue is commonly called CIMBRIC, or CIMBRO-GOTHIC, as it was the dialect that chiefly prevailed among the Gothic tribes who inhabited the *Cimbria Cboranensis*, &c. But whether the ancient CIMBRI, and their confederates the TRUTONES, who made the irruption into the Roman empire in the time of Marius *, were a CELTIC or a GOTHIC people, may perhaps admit of some disquisition.

They who contend that they were CELTS, may urge the resemblance of the name of *Cimbri* to that of *Cymri*, by which the Britons have always called themselves in their own language: They may also produce the authority of Appian, who expressly calls the *Cimbri* CELTS; as well as of several of the Roman authors, who scruple not to name them GAULS †. It may further be observed in favour of this opinion, that the emigration of so large a body of the old Celtic inhabitants, would facilitate the invasion of the Gothic tribes who succeeded them in these northern settlements, and will account for the rapid conquests of Odin and his Asiatic followers: It might also be conjectured, that the small scattered remains of these old Celtic Cimbri were the Savage Men who lurked up and down in the forests and mountains, as described by the ancient Icelandic Historians ‡, and who, in their size and ferocity, so well correspond with the descriptions given us of their countrymen that invaded the Roman empire. Thus far such an opinion is equally consistent both with the Roman and Northern historians.

On the other hand, that the *Cimbri* of Marius were not a Celtic, but a German or a Gothic people, is an opinion that may be supported with no slight arguments. On this head it may be observed, with our Author, Mons Mallet, "that the ancients generally considered this "people as a branch of the Germans §," and that their tall stature and general character rather corresponds with the description of the Germans than of the Celts: That as for the name of *Cimbri* or *Kimber*, it is resolvable into a word in the German Language which signifies WARRIOR or WARLIKE ¶: And that the authorities of the Roman Historians

* Described below, in Chap. II.

† "Appianus in *Libyis* Cimbroes Celtas, addito quos Cimbroes vocant, appellavit.

‡ Et evolve *Norum*, Lib. III. cap. 3. Salustium Bell. Jugurth. in fine. Rufum *Brev.*

§ Cap. VI. qui omnes Cimbroes diserte Gallos, et ab extremis Gallie profugos, nomi-

narunt." Speneri *Notitia Germaniæ Antiquæ*. Hal. Magd. 1717. 4to. p. 123.

¶ See below, p. 31; &c.

§ See below, p. 21.

¶ Germanis quidem Camp exercitum aut locum ubi exercitus castra metatur, significat; inde ipsi vir castrensis et militaris Kemffer et Kempfer et Kempex et Kimber, Kamper,

Historians cannot much be depended on, because (as has been before observed *) they were seldom exact in the names they gave to the barbarous nations. It may further be urged, that the facility with which the Cimbri made their way through Germany into Gaul, renders it probable that they were rather a branch of the German people, than of a race at constant enmity with them, like the Celts, and who, upon that account, would have been opposed in their passage; especially as the Germans appear in these countries rather to have prevailed over the Celts, and to have forced them westward, driving them out of many of their settlements. But lastly, if the Cimbri had been a Celtic people, then such of them as were left behind in their own country, and were afterwards swallowed up among the succeeding Gothic tribes who invaded Scandinavia, would have given a tincture of their Celtic language to that branch of the Teutonic which was spoke in these countries: Or, at least, we should have found more Celtic names of mountains, rivers, &c. in the Cimbric Chersonese, than in other Gothic settlements: But I do not find that either of these is the case; the old Icelandic seems to be as free from any Celtic mixture, as any other Gothic dialect; nor is there any remarkable prevalence of Celtic names in the peninsula of Jutland, more than in any part of Germany, where, I believe, its former Celtic inhabitants have up and down left behind them a few names of places, chiefly of natural situations, as of rivers, mountains, &c. This, at least, is the case in England; where, although the Britons were so intirely extirpated, that scarce a single word of the Welsh language was admitted by the Saxons, and although the names of towns and villages are almost universally of Anglo-Saxon derivation, yet the hills, forests, rivers, &c. have generally retained their old Celtic names †.

But whether the old *Cimbri* were Celts or Goths, yet, forasmuch as from the time of Odin, both the Cimbrica Chersonesus, and all the neighbouring regions were become entirely Gothic settlements, the Gothic dialect which prevailed in these countries is called by antiquaries *Cimbric*, and *Cimbro-Gothic*: It is also sometimes termed *Old Iceland*, because many of the best writers in it came from Iceland, and

because

Kemper, pro varietate dialectorum vocatur; vocabulum hoc nostro [sc. Anglico] Ser-mone nondum penitus exolevit; Norfolcienses enim plebeo et proletario sermone dicunt. "He is a Kemper Old Man," i. e. *Senex vegetus est*. Sheringham, p. 87. See also *Kemperye Man*, in the Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, Vol. I. p. 70.

Sheringham afterwards adds, *Illud autem hoc loco omitendum non est, Cimbro quoque à proceritate corporis hoc nomen habere potuisse . . . Kimber enim aliâ significatione hominem gigantæ corporis mole præditum designat. "Danico hodie idiomate," (inquit Pontæus, in additam. ad Hist. Dan. lib. I.) Kimber sive Kempe et Kemper non bellatorem tantum, sed propriè Gigantem notat.* Sheringh. p. 88. From hence it should seem, that a gigantic person was called *Kimber*, from his resemblance to the ancient *Cimbri*; rather than that this people were called *Cimbri* from their gigantic size; so that this favours the opinion that the *Cimbri* were a different race from the ancient Danes, &c. because no nation would think of calling themselves giants; for if they were all uniformly gigantic, there would appear to themselves nothing remarkable in their size; whereas this would strike another people as a primary and leading distinction.

* See p. lv.

† See *Penigent, Arden, Arvon*, &c. in Camden's *Britannia*, and that author *passim*.

because the Cimbri has been more perfectly preserved in that island than in any other settlement. To the old original mother tongue of all the Gothic dialects, it has been usual (after Verstegan*) to give the name of *Teutonic*, not so much from the Teutones, or *Teutoni*, who inhabited the Danish islands, and were brethren to the *Cimbri*, as from its being the ancient *TUYTSK*, the language of *TWISTO* † and his votaries, the great Father and Deity of the German tribes.

To conclude this subject, whoever would trace the several *Teutonic* languages up to their source, and proceed upon sure and solid principles in inquiries of this kind, need only have recourse to that great and admirable work, *LINGUARUM Vett. Septentrionalium THESAURUS Grammatico-Criticus et Archaeologicus, Autore GEORGIO HICKES, S. T. P. Oxon. 1705. 2 vols. folio.*

* Restitution of decayed Intelligence. 4to. passim. See also Speneri Notit. Antiq. Germ. L. 4. p. 104.

† Celebrant Carminibus antiquis (quod unum apud illos. sc. Germanos, memoria et annalium genus est) *Tuistonem Deum, Terræ editum, et filium Mannum originem gentis, conditoremque.* Tacit. de Mor. German. This *Mannus* is evidently *Man*, the offspring of *TWISTO*, the supreme Deity.

OF THE CELTIC SPECIMENS.

AS the strong resemblance of the several *GOthic* Specimens to each other, so their radical dissimilitude to those of *CELTIC* origin must appear decisive of the great question discussed in the foregoing PREFACE. Had these two languages ever had any pretensions to be considered as congenial, the further we traced them back, the stronger would be the resemblance between them; but the most ancient Specimens appear as utterly dissimilar as the most modern; not but here and there a word may have been accidentally caught up on either side: viz. borrowed by the Goths from the Celtic language, and *vice versa*; or perhaps adopted by each of them from some third language radically different from them both. Thus, from the Welsh *Tâd*, our vulgar have got the common word *Dad* and *Daddy*; and from the French *Delièvre* are derived both the English *Deliver*, and the Armoric *Diluir*, whence the Cornish *Diluer*.

In conformity to the opinion of the most knowing antiquaries, I have given the *Irish* and *Erse* Tongues as descended from one common original with the *Cambrian*, or ancient *British* languages, viz. the *Welsh*, *Aarmoric*, and *Cornish*. But, to confess my own opinion, I cannot think they are equally derived from one common *Celtic* stock; at least not in the same uniform manner as any two branches of the *Gothic*; such, for instance, as the *Anglo-Saxon* and *Francic* from the Old *Teutonic*. Upon comparing the two ancient Specimens given above in page xix. scarce any resemblance appears between them; so that if the learned will have them to be streams from one common fountain, it must be allowed, that one or both of them have been greatly

greatly polluted in their course, and received large inlets from some other channel.

But, notwithstanding this apparent dissimilitude, the celebrated Llyyd, and others who have investigated this subject, firmly maintain, that there is a real affinity between the Irish and Cambrian tongues, and that a great part of both languages is radically the same. He has further shewn, that many names of places in South-Britain, and even in Wales itself, the meaning of which is lost in the Welsh language, can only be explained from words now extant in the Irish and Erse tongues: An incontestible proof, either that the Irish or Erse language originally prevailed all over the southern parts of this Island, or that it is of congenial origin with the Cambrian or Welsh, and so has preserved many words, which are now lost in the other*.

Indeed a good reason may be assigned why the several branches of the Old Celtic differ to the eye so much more than the derivatives of any other language: viz. In the Celtic tongue words are declined by changing, not the Terminations, but the Initial Letters in the oblique cases, or by prefixing an article with an apostrophe (either expressed or implied); so that those who are ignorant of this language are apt to confound the radical Letters with such as are merely super-added and accidental, or to think two words utterly dissimilar, that are only made so by an occasional prefix, or a variety of declension: To give one instance (out of innumerable) of the latter kind, the British word *Pen*, in construction, regularly assumes the form of *Ben*, *Pben*, and *Mben*. e.g.

Pen, a Head.

Pen gŵr, a Man's Head.

i Ben, his Head.

i Pben, her Head.

y'm Mben, my Head.

Before I conclude these slight Remarks, I must beg leave to observe, that as the great subject of this present book is *Gothic Antiquities*, which I apprehend to be totally distinct from the *Celtic*, I only pretend to be exact

* Llyyd thinks both these causes have concurred: viz. 1. That the ancestors of the Irish and Highland Scots, sc. the ancient *Guydhelians*, were the old original Celts, who first inhabited this island; and that the *Cymri*, or Welsh, were another and different race of Celts (a branch of the Celtic *Cimbri*) who succeeded the other, and drove them northwards. II. That the language of both these people, though originally the same, had descended down through different channels, and was rendered still more widely distant, 1. By the additional mixture of Cantabrian words imported into Ireland by the Scots, who came from Spain and settled among the old Guydhellan Celts from Britain: And, 2. By the changes the Cymraeg or Welsh language suffered during the subjection of 500 years to the Romans, &c. (See Llyyd's *Welsh and Irish Prefaces*, translated in the Appendix to Nicholson's *Irish Historical Library*, &c. 1736. folio.)

See also Mailland's "History of Scotland, 2 vols. folio." who has some things curious on this subject, particularly on the passage of the *Cimbri* into Britain; but the generality of his book shews a judgment so warped by national prejudice, is so evidently designed to support a favourite hypothesis, and is writ with such a spirit of coarse invective, that the Reader will be constantly led to suspect that his quotations are unfair, and his arguments fallacious. To mention only one instance of this writer's strange perversion of history, he sets out with denying, in the teeth of Cæsar and all the ancients, that the *Old Britons were ever painted!*

exact and precise as to the *Gothic* or *Teutonic* languages; but do not take upon me to decide on any of the points which relate either to the *Celtic* Antiquities, or *Celtic* Tongues. For this reason I avoid entering into the dispute, which has of late so much interested our countrymen in North-Britain: viz. Whether the *Erse* language was first spoken in Scotland or Ireland. Before the inquisitive reader adopts either opinion, he would do well to consider many curious hints, which are scattered up and down in *Lluyd's* most excellent *Archæologia Britannica*, 1707. fol. and especially in his *Welsh* and *Irish* Prefaces, referred to in the foregoing Note:

The Specimen of the *Erse*, or *Highland Scottish*, in p. xxi. is extracted from the New Testament lately published at Edinburgh, wherein this language is called *Gaidhlig Albannaich*; and upon the authority of that book I have so named it here. This I mention by way of caveat against the censure of those who contend that the true name is *Gaelic*, or *Galic*, and that this word is the same with *Gallie*, the name of the ancient language of *Gaul*. Without deciding the question as to the origin of the *Erse* language itself, I must observe, upon the ancient name of *Gallie*, that this does not seem to have been used by the natives of *Gaul* themselves, but to have been given them by foreigners: They called themselves *Celtæ*, and their language *Celtic**, in like manner as the inhabitants of Wales, though called *Welsh* by us, term themselves *CYMRU*, and their own language *Cymraeg*; who at the same time call us *Saissons*, and our tongue *Saissonaeg*, thus reminding us of our Saxon origin.

* *Qui ipsorum lingua Celtæ, nostra Galli appellantur.* Cæsar de Bello Gall. L. 1. "Celtæ, the Gauls, Gædill, Cadil, or Keil, and in the plural, according to our dialect, Kelllet, or Kellt, (now Guidhelod) *Irishmen*. The word *Keilt* could not be otherwise written by the Romans than *Celtæ* or *Celtæ*." See *Lluyd's* Irish Preface, p. 107. in Nicholson's Irish Historian.

In the same place the reader will find many of the ancient names of offices, persons, &c. mentioned by Cæsar as prevailing in Gaul, explained from the modern Irish language, as *Allobrox*, *Divitiacus*, *Vercingetorix*, *Vergasillaunus*, *Vergobretus*, &c.

OF THE FINN AND LAPLAND SPECIMENS: AND OF THE CANTABRIAN, OR BASQUE.

THE two former of these are subjoined, in order to illustrate what our Author has said below, in p. 33. 34.

Of the *Finn* language it may be observed, that it appears quite original, and underived from any other tongue with which we are acquainted. But as to that of the *Laplanders*, it is apparently a derivative from several others: Many of the words are evidently borrowed from the *Finn* language, and others from the *Norse*, mixed, it may be, with derivatives from the *Greenland* tongue, or perhaps the *Slavonic*. From the *Finn* language are apparently borrowed these words in the

Pater-noster, viz. *Mijam, juu, laibem, pabast, &c.* and these from the *Norse*, or some sister dialect, viz. *Nam, Ryki, Willio, &c.*

As to the *Castabrian*, or *Basque*, it has no apparent affinity with any dialect either of the *Teutonic* or *Celtic* languages. Yet *Lloyd* has given a list of derivatives from this language which are still extant in the *Irish* tongue, and which confirm the opinion, that an ancient colony from Spain actually intermixed among the original inhabitants of *Ireland*.

To this excellent writer, so often quoted, I refer all such as would proceed on sure and solid grounds in their inquiries concerning the *Celtic Language* and *Antiquities*: A subject which has proved the great stumbling-block of modern antiquaries and etymologists, and which has occasioned so many wild, absurd, and childish publications, to the disgrace of all etymology, and scandal of literature. Instead of imitating the caution, diffidence, and modesty of *Lloyd*, who spent several years in travelling and residing among the different branches of the *Celts*, these writers make up a jargon of their own, which they call *Celtic*, and, without knowing any one of the ancient languages truly, set out confidently to explain them all.

That I may not appear invidious, I will not produce instances of the dotage and folly of some of our countrymen in what they call Celtic Etymologies, and Illustrations of Celtic Antiquities, but will refer the reader to a work of a superior class, the celebrated *Memoires de la Langue Celtique*, par M. Bullet. *Besançon*, 1754. 3 vols. folio. This learned, and, in other respects, ingenious writer, is a glaring instance how much a good judgment may be drawn away by a daring hypothesis, and is a warning to others not to write upon subjects they do not understand: For, having little or no acquaintance with the English language, he undertakes to explain, from his own imaginary Celtic Vocabulary, the names of innumerable places in England, in what he calls a *Description Etymologique**: Where, if he had confined himself to some of our rivers, mountains, and forests, he had stood some chance of being right, since many of these retain their old British names: But when he boldly proceeds to our names of villages and towns, which are most of them purely Saxon and English, he falls into such diverting blunders as these, viz.

Aston (which is from the Saxon *Ac*, an Oak, and *Ton*, a Town) he derives from *Ac*, a River, and *Ton*, Habitation.

Aston (which is merely *East-town*, as in some parts of England *Easter* is still called *Aster*) he will have from *Ac*, River, and *Ton*, Habitation.

Aukland (which is probably old English for *Oak-land*) he fetches from *Oc*, a little Hill, *Lan*, River, and *D*, from *Dy*, Two.

Colbrake,

* Une Description Etymologique des villes, rivières, montagnes, forêts, curiosités, nouvelles des Gaules; de la meilleure partie de l'Espagne et de l'Italie; de la Grande Bretagne, dont les Gaulois ont été les premiers habitants. This writer has, however, some things very ingenious and solid.

Colbrake, he says, comes from the Saxon *Brake*, a Bridge; i.e. a Bridge over the Colne.

Dieb-Marib, he derives from *Dieb*, (which he says is from *Dichlud*, *Reine*), and *Mar*, Water. *Dichmar*, Land borne up by Water.

Howe! he says, is from *Han*, a Bending, and *Val*, in composition *Val*, a River.

Highbam (a borough in Northamptonshire, which stands on a hill, at some distance from any river, and which was doubtless named, from its elevated situation, *Highbam*; i.e. the Home, or Habitation on High Ground: See Verstigan.) this writer derives from *Y*, a River, and *Gum*, in composition *Gum*, a Bending.

Northampton, (either so named in contradistinction to *Southampton*, or, according to Camden, originally *North-avinton*); this egregious etymologist derives from *Nor* (*Embschure*), the Mouth of a River; *Tan*, a River, and *Ton*, Habitation.

Northill, (which I suppose is merely North-Hill), he derives from *Nor*, River, and *Tyft*, Habitation.

Oundle (contracted for Avon-dale) he derives from *Avon*, a River, and *Dal*, inclosed; surrounded.

Ringwood (i.e. I suppose, a "Wood ring-fenced," a common forest term) he derives from *Ren* (*Partage*), a Division, *Cw*, River, and *Hed*, a Forest.

Stanford (i.e. Stone, or Stonyford (he derives from *Stan* (*Bambourchire*), a Mouth of a River, *For*, pronounced *For*, Near.

Stratton (i.e. Street-town, the name of a Town on the Watling-street), from *Strat*, Land near a River, and *Ton*, Habitation: Or, from *Ster*, Rivers, *At*, Junction or Joining, and *Ton*, Habitation.

Uxbridge (supposed by some to be corrupted from Quae-bridge) he derives from *Uc*, River, and *Brig* (*Partage*), Division.

Such are the derivations of a writer who sets out to explain the meaning of English names of places, without understanding the signification of our common English words, *Land*, *Brook*, *Marib*, *Well*, *Hill*, *North*, *Hill*, *Dale*, *Wood*, *Ford*, *Street*, or *Bridge*!

So much for Celtic Etymologies!

POSTSCRIPT.

TO the modern tongues derived from the Old *Gimbre-Gothic* above mentioned in p. xiii. may be added a Specimen of the Language spoken by the common people in the Isles of Orkney. This is preserved by Dr Wallace, in his *Account* of those Islands, " Lond. 1700. 8vo." Who tells us it is called by the natives *Norn*. It seems to be a corruption of the *Norse*, Icelandic, &c. and is as follows:

" Fävor i ir i Chimrie. 1. Helleur ir i Nam thite. 2. Gilla coe-
" dum thite cumma. 3. Veya thine mota var gort o Yurn sinna gort
" i Chimrie. 4. Gav vus da on da dalight Brow vora. 5. Firgive vus
" Sinna vora sin vee firgive Sindara mutha vus. 6. Lyv vus ye i
" Tumtation. 7. Min delivera vus fro Ok ilt. Amen.

§3 I suspect the above copy to be incorrectly printed by Wallace:
that " Helleur " should be " Helleut," &c. &c.

✿ In the following Preface, our Author, Mons. MALLET, extols the late King of Denmark, FREDERICK V. as a great patron of literature, and promoter of knowledge: it is therefore but justice to that Monarch to mention a few of the literary undertakings which owe their rise and establishment to his bounty and love of science.

I. He instituted a Society, consisting of four or five gentlemen, who have a salary of 400l. per annum assigned them, purposely for the cultivation of the Danish Language, and illustration of the Icelandic and Northern Antiquities. They have in their possession a great quantity of manuscripts relative to the latter, and, among the rest, the intire VOLUSPA. This Society has already published two volumes upon Miscellaneous Subjects, in which are two Dissertations relative to the ICELANDIC ANTIQUITIES.

II. He directed and enabled his Professor of Botany, Dr ORDER, to publish that magnificent work the *Flora Danica*; of which he commanded presents to be made to all the principal clergy, engaging them to contribute their assistance towards perfecting an undertaking so useful and extensive: And, in order to promote the same design all over Europe, he commanded this work to be printed in the Latin and French, as well as German and Danish languages; and to be carried on till it shall be found to contain the figures and descriptions of all the plants which grow within the limits of the polar circle, and the 53d degree of latitude.

III. He sent the celebrated Mission of Literati to explore the interior parts of Arabia; and to give us a more perfect account of that now almost unknown country; which was once the seat of learning and science: as also to collect whatever reliques could be found of the old Arabian books, history, &c. These Missionaries were FIVE in number, viz Mr Professor DE HAVEN, for Philology and Language: Mr Professor FÖRSKAL (a Disciple of Linnæus), for Natural History: a Lieutenant of Engineers, Mr NIEBUHR, for Geography and Astronomy: Dr CRAMER, for Medicine, and Mr PAURENFEIND, for Drawing and taking Views, &c. The whole design and plan of their voyage may be seen in Mons. MICHAELIS's "*Recueil des questions proposées à une Société de Savans, qui par ordre de sa Maj. Dan. font le voyage de l'Arabie, &c.*" Francf. 1763. 12mo. Of these Five Literati, only one is returned alive out of the East. Their joint observations, however, are in the hands of Mr NIEBUHR, the survivor, which he is preparing for the press in the German language. As some of the travellers died early in their tour, we must not expect to find the original plan entirely completed. The work will be found most perfect in what relates to Geography and Natural History: but though it must, from the circumstances above mentioned, prove somewhat defective, the world may nevertheless form considerable expectations of it; and it will, as we are assured, be given to the public in the course of this present year M,DCC,LXX.

THE
FRENCH AUTHOR'S
P R E F A C E.

IF it be allowed that the History of a considerable people is in itself useful and interesting, independent of all accidental circumstances, it must also be acknowledged, that there are certain points of time when such a History runs a better chance of being received than at any other. This is more particularly the case, when a general curiosity is excited concerning the nation which is the subject of that history. An illustrious reign*, distinguished by whatever can render it dear to a people, and glorious in the eyes of sensible observers, cannot attract the attention of mankind, without inspiring at the same time a desire of knowing the principal events which have preceded that reign.

This reflection sufficiently justifies my design of publishing a new History of Denmark in the French Language. If I am fortunate enough to succeed in my undertaking, I shall be the more happy, as I shall, in many respects, answer the ends of my present employment, and shall give, at the same time, a proof of my gratitude to the Danish nation, who have so generously adopted me for their fellow-citizen.

I am not ignorant that many persons have executed long ago, either in the whole or in part, a work of the same kind with mine; and, I shall

* Our Author here (and below, p. xxxix.) pays a compliment to the late King of Denmark, Frederick V. with what reason, see the preceding page.

shall, in its proper place, do justice to their diligence *. But as the volume which I now offer to the public relates to a subject which these authors have treated either very superficially, or not at all, I shall here, in a few words, give my reasons why, at setting out, I have followed a plan somewhat different from theirs.

To run cursorily over a number of events, unconnected and void of circumstances, without being able to penetrate into their true causes; to see people, princes, conquerors, and legislators succeed one another rapidly upon the stage, without knowing any thing of their real character, manner of thinking, or of the spirit which animated them; this is to have only the skeleton of history; this is merely to behold a parcel of dark and obscure shadows, instead of living and conversing with real men. For this reason, I have all along resolved not to meddle with the body of the Danish History, till I have presented my readers with a sketch of the manners and genius of the first inhabitants of Denmark. But I imagined, like those who have preceded me in this attempt, that a few pages would have sufficed for illustrating the most essential of these points; nor was it till I had examined this matter with new attention, that I discovered my mistake. I then found, that too much brevity would defeat the end I proposed, which was, to place my subject in different points of view, all of them equally new and interesting.

In fact, History has not recorded the annals of a people who have occasioned greater, more sudden, or more numerous revolutions in Europe than the Scandinavians, or whose antiquities, at the same time, are so little known. Had, indeed, their emigrations been only like those sudden torrents of which all traces and remembrance are soon effaced, the indifference that has been shown to them would have been sufficiently justified by the barbarism they have been reproached with. But, during those general inundations, the face of Europe underwent so total a change, and during the confusion they occasioned such different establishments took place, new societies were formed, animated so intirely with a new spirit, that the History of our own manners and institutions ought necessarily to ascend back, and even dwell a considerable time upon a period which discovers to us their chief origin and source.

But I ought not barely to assert this. Permit me to support the assertion by proofs. For this purpose, let us briefly run over all the different Revolutions which this part of the world underwent, during the long course of ages which its History comprehends, in order to see

* Our Author probably alludes to a former History of Denmark in the French language (dedicated to the present King's grandfather, K. Frederick IV.) intitled, "*L'Histoire de Dannemarc avant et depuis l'Etablissement de la Monarchie: Par Mr J. B. Des Roches, Escuyer, Conseiller et Avocat General du Roi Tr. Chr. au Bureau des Finances et Chambre du Domaine de la Generalité de la Rochelle.*" Amst. 1730. 6 vol. 12mo. To this work is prefixed a *Preface Historique, pour servir d'Introduction a l'Histoire de Dannemarc*; which contains a tolerable display of the Northern Antiquities, &c.

see what share the nations of the north have had in producing them. If we recur back to the remotest times, we observe a nation issuing step by step from the forests of Scythia, incessantly increasing, and dividing to take possession of the uncultivated countries which it met with in its progress. Very soon after, we see the same people, like a tree full of vigour, extending long branches over all Europe; we see them also carrying with them, wherever they came, from the borders of the Black Sea, to the extremities of Spain, of Sicily, and Greece, a religion simple and martial as themselves, a form of government dictated by good sense and liberty, a restless unconquered spirit, apt to take fire at the very mention of subjection and constraint, and a ferocious courage, nourished by a savage and vagabond life. While the gentleness of the climate softened imperceptibly the ferocity of those who settled in the south, colonies of Egyptians and Phenicians mixing with them upon the coasts of Greece, and thence passing over to those of Italy, taught them at last to live in cities, to cultivate letters, arts, and commerce. Thus their opinions, their customs, and genius were blended together, and new states were formed upon new plans. Rome, in the mean time, arose, and at length carried all before her. In proportion as she increased in grandeur, she forgot her ancient manners, and destroyed, among the nations whom she overpowered, the original spirit with which they were animated. But this spirit continued unaltered in the colder countries of Europe, and maintained itself there like the independency of the inhabitants. Scarce could fifteen or sixteen centuries produce there any change in that spirit. There it renewed itself incessantly; for, during the whole of that long interval, new adventurers issuing continually from the original inexhaustible country, trod upon the heels of their fathers towards the north, and, being in their turn succeeded by new troops of followers, they pushed one another forwards, like the waves of the sea. The northern countries, thus overstocked, and unable any longer to contain such restless inhabitants, equally greedy of glory and plunder, discharged at length, upon the Roman empire, the weight that oppressed them. The barriers of the empire, ill defended by a people whom prosperity had enervated, were borne down on all sides by torrents of victorious armies. We then see the conquerors introducing, among the nations they vanquished, viz. into the very bosom of slavery and sloth, that spirit of independance and equality, that elevation of soul, that taste for rural and military life, which both the one and the other had originally derived from the same common source, but which were then among the Romans breathing their last. Dispositions and principles so opposite, struggled long with forces sufficiently equal, but they united in the end, they coalesced together, and from their coalition sprung those principles and that spirit which governed, afterwards, almost all the states of Europe, and which, notwithstanding the differences of climate, of religion, and particular accidents, do still visibly reign in them, and retain, to this day, more or less, the traces of their first common original.

It is easy to see, from this short sketch, how greatly the nations of the north have influenced the different fates of Europe : And, if it be worth while to trace its revolutions to their causes, if the illustration of its institutions, of its police, of its customs, of its manners, of its laws, be a subject of useful and interesting inquiry, it must be allowed, that the antiquities of the north, that is to say, every thing which tends to make us acquainted with its ancient inhabitants, merits a share in the attention of thinking men. But to render this obvious by a particular example : Is it not well known, that the most flourishing and celebrated states of Europe owe originally to the northern nations whatever liberty they now enjoy, either in their constitution, or in the spirit of their government ? For although the Gothic form of government has been almost every where altered or abolished, have we not retained, in most things, the opinions, the customs, the manners which that government had a tendency to produce ? Is not this, in fact, the principal source of that courage, of that aversion to slavery, of that empire of honour which characterise in general the European nations, and of that moderation, of that easiness of access, and peculiar attention to the rights of humanity, which so happily distinguish our sovereigns from the inaccessible and superb tyrants of Asia ? The immense extent of the Roman empire had rendered its constitution so despotic and military, many of its emperors were such ferocious monsters, its senate was become so mean-spirited and vile, that all elevation of sentiment, every thing that was noble and manly, seems to have been for ever banished from their hearts and minds : Insomuch, that if all Europe had received the yoke of Rome in this her state of debasement, this fine part of the world, reduced to the inglorious condition of the rest, could not have avoided falling into that kind of barbarity, which is of all others the most incurable ; as, by making as many slaves as there are men, it degrades them so low, as not to leave them even a thought or desire of bettering their condition. But nature had long prepared a remedy for such great evils, in that unsubmitting, unconquerable spirit, with which she had inspired the people of the north ; and thus she made amends to the human race for all the calamities which, in other respects, the inroads of these nations, and the overthrow of the Roman empire produced.

“ The great prerogative of Scandinavia (says the admirable author of the Spirit of Laws), and what ought to recommend its inhabitants beyond every people upon earth, is, that they afforded the great resource to the liberty of Europe, that is, to almost all the liberty that is among men. The Goth JORNANDES (adds he) calls the north of Europe THE FORGE OF MANKIND. I should rather call it, the forge of those instruments which broke the fetters manufactured in the south. It was there those valiant nations were bred, who left their native climes to destroy tyrants and slaves, and to teach men that nature having made them equal, no reason could be

“ assigned

"assigned for their becoming dependent, but their mutual happiness."

If these considerations be of any weight, I shall easily be excused for having treated at so much length the antiquities of the nation whose history I write. The judicious public will see and decide, whether I have conceived a just idea of my subject, or whether, from an illusion too common with Authors, I have not ascribed to it more importance than it deserves. I should not be without some apprehensions of this kind, if that were always true which is commonly said, that we grow fond of our labours in proportion as they are difficult. Many tedious and unentertaining volumes I have been obliged to peruse: I have had more than one language to learn: My materials were widely scattered, ill digested, and often little known: It was not easy to collect them, or to accommodate them to my purpose. These are all circumstances ill calculated, it must be owned, to give me much assurance. But I have likewise met with very considerable assistances; several learned men have treated particular points of the antiquities of the north with that deep erudition which characterises the studies of the last age. I cannot mention without acknowledgement and praise, BARTHOLINUS, WORMIUS, STEPHANIUS, ARNGRIM JONAS, TORÆUS, &c. I have also consulted with advantage, two learned strangers, Mess. PELLOUTIER and DALIN. The first, in his History of the Celtes, has thrown a great deal of light upon the religion of the first inhabitants of Europe. The second has given a new History of Sweden, which discovers extensive reading and genius. In three or four chapters, where the author treats of the religion, the laws, and manners of the ancient Swedes, we find these subjects discussed with unusual perspicuity and elegance.

There are people of that happy genius, that they need only wish in order to succeed, and have every resource within themselves. As for me, I dare hardly reckon among my advantages the strong motives and inducements I have had to my undertaking. I dare not tell strangers, that I have had the happiness of being encouraged by more than one Mæcenæas, and by a Prince, alike knowing, and zealous in the advancement of knowledge. They would judge of me, unquestionably according to what such numerous and great encouragements ought to have produced; when, perhaps, I hardly find myself capable of discharging the duties which lie upon me in common with all Historians.

Is it necessary that I should take notice, before I conclude, that I am about to delineate a nation in its infancy, and that the greatest part of the other Europeans were neither less savage, nor less uncivilized, during the same period? I shall give sufficient proofs of this in other places, being persuaded that there is among nations an emulation of glory, which often degenerates into jealousy, and puts them upon assuming a pre-eminence upon the most chimerical advantages: That there glows in their bosoms a patriotic zeal, which is often so blind

and ill informed, as to take alarm at the most slender and indifferent declarations made in favour of others.

In the second volume will be found a Translation of the Edda, and of some other fragments of Mythology and ancient pieces of Poetry. They are singular, and, in many respects, precious monuments, which throw much light upon the Antiquities of the north, and upon those of the other 'Gothic' nations. They will serve for Proofs, and be a Supplement to this Description of the Manners of the Ancient Danes; and for this reason, as well as out of deference to the advice of some persons of taste, I was induced to translate them, and to annex them to it.

* *Celtic*. Orig.

A
DESCRIPTION
OF THE
MANNERS, CUSTOMS, &c.
OF THE
ANCIENT DANES,
And other NORTHERN NATIONS.

CHAPTER I.

*Denmark described, and the several countries subject to
its Crown, viz. Norway, Iceland, and Greenland.*

THE several countries, which compose the Danish monarchy, have seldom justice done them by the other nations of Europe. The notions entertained of them are not commonly the most favourable or true. This is owing to various causes. The situation of some of the provinces is so remote, that

skilful travellers have seldom had occasion to visit them. Those who have pretended to describe them have been generally wanting in fidelity or exactness; some of their descriptions are grown obsolete, so that what was once true, is no longer so at present. Lastly, such confusion and prejudices have been occasioned by that vague term *THE NORTH*, that we are not to wonder if Denmark has been thought slightly of by the southern nations. To correct these mistakes, I shall lay before the reader a faithful account of the present state of these countries: In which I shall be more or less diffuse in proportion as they are more or less known to foreigners, for whom this work is principally designed. And if the picture I draw, presents nothing very agreeable or striking, I dare at least promise that it shall be very exact and faithful.

DENMARK is naturally divided into continent, and islands. Among the islands, the first that merits attention, as well on account of its size as fertility, is *ZEALAND*. In this isle is seated *COPENHAGEN*, the capital of the whole kingdom; which derives its name from its harbour*, one of the finest in the world. This city is built upon the very edge of that channel, so well known by the name of the *SOUND*, and receives into its bosom a small arm of the sea, which divides

* Its name in the Danish language is *KIOBHAFEN*; which literally is a "Haven for merchandize or traffic;" from *KIOB*, *Mercari*, and *HAFEN*, *Portus*. This city has been reckoned by travellers to be about the size of *Bristol*.

divides Zealand from another isle of less extent, but of very agreeable situation, named AMAC. Copenhagen, which is at present very strong, wealthy, and populous, hath continually improved in its dimensions and beauty ever since King Christopher of Bavaria fixed his residence there in the year 1443: but it owes its greatest splendor to the last reign, and that of the present King Frederic V. in which it hath been adorned with a palace worthy of the monarch who inhabits it, and with many stately buildings, as well public as private.

At some leagues distance towards the north, this channel, which washes the walls of Copenhagen, grows gradually narrower, being confined between the two opposite coasts of Zealand and Schonen, till it forms at length what is properly called the Passage of the Sound; one of the most celebrated and most frequented straits in the world; and which opens the principal communication between the ocean and the Baltic. ELSENORE, which is situated on the brink of the Sound, and defended by the fortrefs of CRONENBERG, enjoys the ever-moving picture of a multitude of ships, which pass and repass, and come to pay their tribute to the king*. About a league distant, the opposite shore terminates the prospect in a very agreeable manner; and not far off, between the two banks, rises the little isle of WEME, famous for the observations

* A certain toll paid by the merchant-ships for passing the Sound.

observations of Tycho Brahe. Although the other parts of Zealand afford nothing so striking as this, the eye will find enough to entertain it every where else. Here are vast plains covered with a most delightful verdure, which springs earlier, and continues longer than the southern nations would imagine. These plains are interspersed with little hills, lakes, and groves; and adorned with several palaces, many gentlemen's seats*, and a good number of cities and towns. The soil, though light and somewhat sandy, produces a great quantity of grain, particularly of oats and barley: nor is it deficient in woods and pastures. Besides, the sea and lakes furnish this island with fish in such abundance, as might well supply the want of the other productions and advantages in a country less fertile or less addicted to commerce.

But fertility is in a still more eminent degree the character of FUNEN, which is the second of the Danish isles in point of size, but the first in goodness of soil. This island rises higher than that of Zealand, and is separated from it by an arm of the sea, which, on account of its breadth, is called the GREAT BELT, to distinguish it from another smaller channel, that divides it from Jutland, and is called the LESSER BELT. Corn, pasture, and fruits grow plentifully in this island, which presents the most delightful appearance. In the middle of a vast plain stands ODENSEE, the capital

* In French, *Châteaux*:

pital of the province ; and seven towns less considerable adorn the sea-coasts at almost equal distances.

The isles of LALAND and FALSTRIA yield not much in point of fertility to Funen, being both of them famous for their fine wheat : but the latter of these produces also fruits in such abundance, that one may justly call it the Orchard of Denmark. Amidst the multitude of lesser islands that are scattered round the principal ones, there are few which do not supply their inhabitants with necessaries, and even afford them an overplus for traffic. L. ANGLAND hath plenty of fine corn fields. BORNHOLM, MONA, and SAMSOE have excellent pastures. AMAG is found very proper for pulse, and is become a fruitful garden under the hands of those industrious Flemings, who were brought hither by Queen Elizabeth, wife of Christian II. and sister of Charles V.

If we pass over to the provinces on the Continent, we shall find new reasons to convince us, that Denmark plentifully supports its inhabitants, and is able to enrich even a numerous people. JUTLAND, the largest of these provinces, forms the head of that long peninsula, which is bounded by the ocean to the west, by the gulph of Categade, and the Baltic to the east, and which opens a communication into Germany towards the south. From this province they carry into Norway a great part of the corn used in that kingdom ; and hence are exported those thousands of head of cattle, which are every year brought into Holland and other countries. Here are also bred those Danish
horses,

horses, whose beauty makes them so much sought after in all parts of Europe. If the inland parts are barren in some places, the coasts extremely abound with fish. This affords a resource so much the greater, as they increase and breed in the long bays, which run up into the country, in such a manner that almost all the inhabitants enjoy the benefit of the fishery. The gulph of LIMFIORDE in particular reaches almost from one sea to the other; and the fishing therein is so rich, that, after it has supplied the wants of the province, it constantly produces large quantities for exportation *.

Nature hath been no less indulgent to the southern part of this peninsula, which forms the dutchy of SLESWIC. Although the inland parts of this country have large tracts of heath and barren fields, yet the fertility of its coasts, its advantageous situation between the ocean and the Baltic, the number and convenience of its harbours, and the large traffic which it carries on, have enriched many of its cities, and rendered it an agreeable and flourishing province.†.

What I have said of the dutchy of Sleswic is pretty nearly applicable to the dutchy of HOLSTEIN. This province

* "The principal cities of Jutland are ALBURG, NYCOFFING, WYBURG, AARHUSEN, RANDERS, HORSSENS, WARDE, RIBE, FREDERICIA, COLDING, &c. *First Edit.*" "considerable city, is the capital of the dutchy. FLENSBURG hath an extensive commerce. FREDERICKSTADT, TONDEREN, and TONNINGEN, are cities of tolerable size." *First Edit.*

† "SLESWIC, an ancient and

province is in general rich, fertile, and populous*; Fat and plentiful pastures; large and trading cities situate near together; coasts abounding in fish, and a large river† which terminates the province towards the south, form its principal advantages‡.

On the other side of the Elb, after crossing the country of Bremen, we find two small provinces, which have been long united to the crown of Denmark.

These

* Lord Molesworth observes, " makes me verily believe, that that this country very much resembles ENGLAND. Another traveller has remarked, that the inhabitants are in their persons very like the ENGLISH. See "Howell's Letters," vol. 1. sect. 6. lett. 4. It seems this writer was at Rendsburg (or as he calls it Rainsburg) when the king of Denmark held an assembly of the states there in 1632. " Among other things, he says, I put myself to mark the carriage of the Holstein gentlemen, as they were going in and out at the parliament-house: and observing well their physiognomies, their complexions, and gait; I thought verily I was in England; for they resemble the English more than either Welsh or Scot, (though cohabiting upon the same island) or any other people that ever I saw yet; which

" the English nation came first from this lower circle of Saxony; and there is one thing that strengtheneth me in this belief; that there is an ancient town hard by, called Lunden, and an island called Angles; whence it may well be that our country came from Britannia to be Anglia." This remark is confirmed by the most diligent inquirers into this subject, who place the country of our Saxon ancestors in the Cimbric Chersonese, in the tracts of land since known by the names of Jutland, Angelen, and Holstein. T.

† The Elb.

‡ " The king of Denmark possesses here RENDSBURG, a very strong place, ALTONA, a town of great trade, and GLUCKENSTADT, a good fortification."

First Edit.

These are the counties of **OLDENBURG** and **DELMENHORST**, which are comprized within the circle of **Westphalia**, and have received their names from their two principal cities.

The temperature of the air is nearly the same in the greatest part of these provinces; and, except in the north of **Jutland**, is much milder than their situation would incline one to believe, being rarely subject to very long or rigorous cold. To comprehend this, it will be sufficient to remind the reader of this general observation, that countries surrounded with the sea, have their atmosphere loaded with vapours continually exhaling from it, which break and blunt the nitrous particles of the air, and soften its rigours. When the straits and gulphs, which surround the Danish islands, become frozen in very sharp winters, it is less owing to the prevalence of the frost there, than to the large flakes of ice which are driven by the winds out of the northern seas, and are there assembled and united. The summer season commonly begins with the month of **May**, and continues till **October**: And during its continuance, the beauty of the country, the freshness and shortness of the nights, and the convenience of navigation in a country surrounded and crossed by the sea, easily repair and make the inhabitants forget the languors and interruptions which winter causes in their business and amusements.

If travellers for the most part have not been very favourable in their accounts of **Denmark**, they have been still less tender of **Norway**. They have often confounded

confounded it with Lapland, and have given descriptions of its inhabitants, and their manners, which are hardly applicable to the savages of that country. The notion that is generally entertained of the extreme coldness of the climate here is no less unjust. It is true, that in a kingdom which extends thirteen degrees from north to south, the temperature of the air cannot every where be the same: accordingly the most northern parts of Norway, those which face the east, and which are not sheltered by the mountains from the fury of the north winds, are undoubtedly exposed to rigorous winters. But almost all that length of coast, which is washed by the sea towards the west, and which forms so considerable a part of Norway, commonly enjoys an air tolerably temperate, even in the middle of winter. Here are none of those "desolate regions, where Winter hath established his eternal empire, and where he reigns among horrid heaps of ice and snow," as ignorance hath often led travellers, and a fondness for the marvellous induced poets to speak of Norway. It is seldom that a very sharp frost lasts there a fortnight or three weeks together; it rains frequently at BERGEN in the midst of winter *, and the ports of Hamburg, Lubeck, and Amsterdam, are locked up with frost ten times for once that this city is so exposed. In short, this is an accident that doth not happen more than two or three

VOL. I. B times

* See PONTOPPIDAN's Natural History of Norway, vol. 2.

tiness in an age. The vapours which rise from the ocean, continually soften the sharpness of the cold; and it is only on the coasts of Iceland, Finmark, and Greenland, that are found those immense and eternal banks of ice, of which voyagers make such a noise, and which, when they are severed, may sometimes float along the coasts of Norway.

The greatest inconvenience to which this vast country is exposed, arises without dispute, from the inequality of the ground, from it's being almost entirely covered with rocks and stones, and crossed every way by high and large mountains, which render a great part of it wild and desert. There grow, notwithstanding, several sorts of grain in many of the provinces, as in the UPLANDS, the RYFOLKE, JEDEREN *; the rest which have not this advantage may easily be supplied from Jutland or the Danish islands, by means of navigation. Various products, with which this country abounds, sufficiently compensate for that disadvantage.

The other nations of Europe cannot be ignorant that great part of the pitch and tar, of the masts, planks, and different sorts of timber, which are every where used, come from Norway. These articles alone would be sufficient to procure an easy competence for the inhabitants of the inland and eastern parts of this country.

* HOLBERG's Danm. og. Norg. Beskrivelse. [i. e. Description of Denmark and Norway.] p. 36. & seq.

country. The western coast hath a resource not less rich or less certain, in the prodigious abundance of its fish. God, salmon, and herrings, are no where found in greater quantities. The Norwegians supply part of Europe with these; and this fruitful branch of commerce becomes every day more extensive by the care of a wise administration. The very mountains of this country, which at first sight, appear so barren, often conceal great riches in their bosoms. Some of them are intire quarries of fine marble, which the luxury of all the cities of Europe could never exhaust. In others are found jasper, crystal, and some precious stones; several mines of gold, though hitherto not very rich; two mines of silver by no means scanty; much copper; but above all, so great a quantity of iron, that this single article brings almost as much money into the kingdom, as what arises from the sale of its timber.

At the northern extremity of this kingdom, and of Europe, dwells a people, which, from the earliest ages, have differed from the other inhabitants of Scandinavia, in figure, manners, and language. This nation, known by the name of FINNS, or LAPLANDERS*, not only possess the northern parts of Norway, but also vast countries in Muscovy and Sweden. They are a coarse and savage race of men, yet by no means
barbarous,

* Our author speaks of these as if they were but one, whereas they are two distinct people.

barbarous, if we understand by this word mischievous and cruel. Such of them as live upon the sea coasts support themselves by fishing, and by a traffic they carry on with a sort of little barks, which they make and sell to the Norwegians. The rest wander up and down in the mountains without any fixed habitation, and gain a scanty subsistence by hunting, by their pelteries, and their rein-deer. Such of them as are neighbours to the Norwegians have embraced christianity, and are somewhat civilized by their commerce with that people. The rest live still in ignorance, not knowing so much as the names of the other nations of the world; preserved by their poverty and their climate from the evils which disturb the enjoyments of more opulent countries. Their whole religion consists in some confused notions of an invisible and tremendous being: and a few superstitious ceremonies compose their worship. They have no laws, and scarce any magistrates: yet have they great humanity, a natural softness of disposition, and a very hospitable temper.

They were nearly the same in the time of Tacitus. "The FINNS *," he says, "live in extreme savageness, in squalid poverty: have neither arms, nor steeds, nor houses. Herbs are their food, skins their cloathing, the earth their bed. All their resource is their arrows, which they point with fish bones

* FENNI. TACIT. De morib. Germ. ad. fin.

“ bones, for want of iron. Their women live by
 “ hunting, as well as the men*; for they every
 “ where accompany them, and gain their share of the
 “ prey. A rude hovel shelters their infants from the
 “ inclemencies of the weather, and the beasts of prey.
 “ Such is the home to which their young men re-
 “ turn; the asylum to which the old retire. This kind
 “ of life they think more happy, than the painful
 “ toils of agriculture, than the various labours of
 “ domestic management, than that circle of hopes and
 “ fears, in which men are involved by their attention
 “ to the fortune of themselves and others. Equally
 “ secure both as to gods and men, the Finns have
 “ attained that rare privilege, not to form a single
 “ wish.”

I ought not to separate ICELAND from Norway. This island, the largest in Europe next to Great Britain, is surrounded by that part of the northern sea, which geographers have been pleased to call the Deucaledonian ocean. Its length from east to west is about 112 Danish miles, (12 to a degree,) and its mean breadth may be 50 of those miles †. Nature itself hath marked out the division of this country ‡. Two long chains of mountains run from the middle of the eastern

* This seems to contradict the passage above, that herbs are their food: I suppose herbs were their ordinary food; flesh gained by hunting, their regale.

† About 560 English miles long, and 250 broad. T.

‡ EGERH. OLAI ENARRAT. Hist. top. de Island. p. 18. § 6.

eastern and western coasts, rising by degrees till they meet in the center of the island: from whence two other chains of smaller hills gradually descend till they reach the coasts that lie north and south; thus making a primary division of the country into four quarters (*fjerdings*) which are distinguished by the four points of the compass towards which they lie.

The whole island can only be considered as one vast mountain, interspersed with long and deep vallies, concealing in its bosom heaps of minerals, of vitrified and bituminous substances, and rising on all sides out of the ocean in the form of a short blunted cone*.

Earthquakes and volcanoes have through all ages laid waste this unhappy island. Hecla, the only one of these volcanoes, which is known by the name to the rest of Europe, seems at present extinct; but the principles of fire, which lie concealed all over the island, often break out in other places. There have been already within this century many eruptions, as dreadful as they were unexpected. From the bosom of these enormous heaps of ice we have lately seen ascend torrents of smoke, of flame, and melted or calcined substances, which spread fire and inundation wide over the neighbouring fields, whilst they filled the air with thick clouds, and hideous roarings caused by the melting of such immense quantities of snow
and

* Vid. HORREBOW'S Natural History of Iceland, passim.

and ice. One meets almost every where in travelling through this country, with marks of the same confusion and disorder. One sees enormous piles of sharp and broken rocks, which are sometimes porous and half calcined, and often frightful on account of their blackness, and the traces of fire, which they still retain. The clefts and hollows of the rocks are only filled with those hideous and barren ruins; but in the valleys, which are formed between the mountains, and which are scattered here and there all over the island very often at a considerable distance from each other, are found very extensive and delightful plains, where nature, who always mingles some allay with the rigour of her severities, affords a tolerable asylum for men who know no better, and a most plentiful and delicate nourishment for cattle.

I ought to bestow a word or two upon another northern country dependent on the kingdom of Norway, as well as Iceland, but much more extensive, more unknown, and more savage: I mean GREENLAND, a vast country, which one knows not whether to call an island or continent. It extends from the 60th to the 80th degree of latitude; farther than that men have not penetrated. All that we can know for certain of it is, that this country, little known to geographers, stretches away from its southern point, named Cape Farewel, continually widening both towards the east and west. The eastern coast in some places is not distant more than 40 Danish miles from Iceland, but the ice which surrounds it, or other unknown

known causes, make it now pass for inaccessible. Yet it was chiefly on this coast that the Norwegians formerly established a colony, as we shall shew hereafter : a colony which at this time is either destroyed, or perhaps only neglected, and cut off from all communication with the rest of the world. With regard to the western coast, which alone is frequented by the Danes at present ; it is known no farther than the 70th degree. It is very probable that on this side, Greenland joins to the continent of America. Yet no one hath hitherto reached the bottom of the Bay, or Straits of Davies. The Savages whom the Danes have found on this coast are not unlike the Laplanders in figure, yet speak a language quite different from theirs *. They are short of stature, and thick-set, their visage is broad and tawny, their lips are thick, and their hair black and coarse. They are robust, phlegmatic, incurious, and even stupid when their

OWN

* It is now said that the language of the Greenlanders is nearly the same with that of the American Savages in Newfoundland, and on the coast of Hudson's Bay. To prove which assertion, it is related, that a few years ago a Moravian missionary, who had long resided among the Greenlanders, went by the favour of Commodore Paliser to Newfoundland ; that he there met with a

tribe of Indians, who at first sight were shy and reserved ; but hearing him address them very intelligibly in a dialect of their own tongue, cried out in a sort of transport, " Our friend is come." These Moravians have, by most disinterested labour, and wonderful perseverance, converted to Christianity and civil life numbers of Greenland Savages.

own interest is not immediately concerned. Yet their children have been found capable of the same instructions as those of Europeans. They live without laws, and without superiors, yet with great union and tranquillity. They are neither quarrelsome nor mischievous, nor warlike; being greatly afraid of those that are: and they keep fair with the Europeans from this motive. Theft, blows and murder are almost unknown to them. They are chaste before marriage, and love their children tenderly. Their nastiness is so great, that it renders their hospitality almost useless to Europeans; and their simplicity hath not been able to preserve them from having priests, who pass among them for enchanters, and are in truth very great and dexterous cheats. As to their religion, it consists in the belief of certain good and evil Genii, and of a Land of Souls, to which, however, they pay little or no regard in their actions.

CHAPTER II.

*Of the first Inhabitants of Denmark, and particularly
of the Cimbri.*

IT is useless to enquire at what period of time Denmark began to be inhabited. Such a research would doubtless lead us up to an age when all Europe was plunged in ignorance and barbarity. These two words include in them almost all we know of the history of the first ages. It is very probable, that the first Danes were, like all the other Teutonic nations, a colony of Scythians, who spread themselves at different times over the countries which lay towards the west. The resemblance of name might induce us to believe that it was from among the Cimmerian Scythians (whom the ancients placed to the north of the Euxine sea) that the first colonies were sent into Denmark; and that from this people they inherited the name of Cimbri*, which they bore so long before

* Kempers or combatants; from *kempsen*, to fight. See Forst. North Ditsch. 24. Strabo describes them as having red hair and blue eyes.

fore they assumed that of Danes *. But this resemblance of name, which many historians produce as a solid proof, is liable to so many different explanations, that it is better to acknowledge once for all, that this subject is as incapable of certainty, as it is unworthy of research.

Whatever was the origin of the Gimibri, they for a long time before the birth of Christ inhabited the country, which received from them the name of the Cimbrica Chersonesus †, and probably comprehended Jutland, Sleswic; and Holstein, and perhaps some of the neighbouring provinces. The ancients considered this people as a branch of the Germans, and never distinguished the one from the other in the descriptions they have left us of the manners and customs of that nation. The historical monuments of the north give us still less information about them, and go no farther back than the arrival of Odin; the epoch of which, I am inclined to place, with the celebrated Torfæus, about 70 years before the birth of Christ. All that passed in Denmark before that period would be entirely unknown to us, if the famous expedition of the Cimibri into Italy had not drawn upon them the attention of a people who enjoyed the advantage of

* The historians of the north do not inform us when this name began to be in use. Among foreign writers, PROCOPIUS, an author of the VIth century, is the first who appears to have made

use of it. We shall see below, what we are to think of the etymologies which have been given of this name.

† Or Cimbric Peninsula.

having historians. It is a single gleam, which for a moment throws light upon the ages of obscurity : short and transient as it is, let us nevertheless catch it, in order to discover, if possible, a feature or two of the character of this people.

The history of Rome * informs us, that in the consulship of Cæcilius Metellus and Papirius Carbo, about one hundred and eleven years before the Christian æra †, the republic was agitated by intestine divisions which already began to threaten it's liberty, when the intrigues of the several factions were all at once suspended by the sudden news of an irruption of Barbarians. More than three hundred thousand men, known by the name of Cimbri and Teutones ‡, who chiefly issued from the Cimbric Chersonese, and the neighbouring islands, had forsaken their country to go in search of a more favourable climate, of plunder and glory. They attacked and subdued at once whatever people they found in their passage, and as they met with no resistance, resolved to push their conquests farther. The Gauls were overwhelmed with this torrent, whose course was for a long time marked by the most horrible desolation. Terror every where went before them, and when it was reported at Rome, that they were disposed to pass into Italy, the

confernation

* See PLUTARCH in Mariæ.—
 OROS. l. 5.—VEL. PATERCUL. l.
 2.—T. LIV. epit. l. 68.—FLOR. l. 3.
 c. 30.

† Anno Urb. cond. 640.
 ‡ Or Theodan, i. e. the companions of the Kimbers or Cimbri.
 See FORST. N. Discov. 24.

consternation there became general. The senate dispatched Papirius Carbo with an army to guard the passage of the Alps, deeming it a sufficient degree of good fortune, if they could but preserve Italy from these formidable guests. But, as they took a different rout, and stopped some time on the banks of the Danube, the Romans resumed courage, and condemning their former fears, sent in a menacing tone to the Cimbri, to bid them take care not to disturb the Norici their allies. At the same time, the Cimbri being informed that a Roman army approached them, and respecting the character of the Republic, sent ambassadors to the Consul Papirius, "to excuse themselves, forasmuch as having come from the remote parts of the north, they could not possibly know that the Norici were the allies of the Romans:" adding, "that they only knew it to be a received law among all nations, that the conqueror hath a right to whatever he can acquire: and that the Romans themselves had no other pretensions to most of the countries they had subdued, than what was founded on the sword. That they had, however, a great veneration for the Roman people, on account of their virtue and bravery; in consideration of which, although they knew not what it was to fear, they consented to leave the Norici in peace, and to employ their valour in some other quarter, where they could do it without incurring the displeasure of the common-wealth." Satisfied with so moderate an answer, the Consul suffered them quietly to remove;

remove ; but when the Cimbri were retired into Dalmatia, and expected nothing less than hostilities from the Romans, a party of those commanded by Carbo, surpris'd them by night, asleep and unarmed. These brave warriors, full of indignation, flew to their arms and defended themselves with so much intrepidity, that they wrested the victory out of their enemies hands, and forced them to seek their safety by flight. But although the Romans almost all escaped the vengeance of their enemies, this defeat was not the less fatal to the republic ; for the splendour and reputation which it added to the arms of the Cimbri, drew on all sides under their banners such nations as were either impatient of the Roman yoke, or jealous of their incroachments : particularly the Tigurini and Ambrones, two people originally of Helvetia. With these new auxiliaries they overwhelmed Gaul a second time, and advancing to the foot of the Pyrenees, endeavoured to establish themselves in Spain : but meeting with a vigorous repulse from the Celtiberians, and tired with so many unprofitable invasions, they sent a new embassy to the Romans, to offer them their services, upon condition they would give them lands to cultivate. The Senate, too prudent to enter into any kind of accommodation with such dangerous enemies, and already divided among themselves about the distribution of lands, returned a direct refusal to their demand. Upon which the Cimbri resolved to seize by force what they could not gain by intreaty, and immediately fell with so much fury upon the new

Consul

Consul Silanus, who had received orders to march against them, that they forced his intrenchments, pillaged his camp, and cut all his army in pieces. This victory was soon after followed by another, which their allies the Ambrones gained over Cassius Longinus at the mouth of the Rhone; and to complete the misfortune, a third army of Romans, more considerable than the two former, was soon after entirely defeated. Scaurus, who commanded it, was made prisoner, and afterwards put to death; his two sons were slain, and more than four-score thousand of the Romans and their allies were left dead on the field. Last of all, two other generals, the Consul Manlius, and the proconsul Cæpio, to whom had been intrusted a fourth army already half vanquished with fear, and who were disunited and jealous of each other, were attacked near the Rhone, each of them in his camp, and entirely defeated.

Such repeated losses filled Rome with grief and terror; and many began to despair even of the safety of the state. In this melancholy conjuncture, minds less firm than those of these spirited Republicans, would, doubtless, have suggested the imprudent measure of granting to the conquerors conditions capable of softening them: they would have given them at once the lands they had required, or perhaps have purchased their friendship with a sum of money. This dangerous policy would probably have ruined Rome in this exigence, as it did some ages after. The Gauls, the Germans, and the Scythians, poor and greedy nations,
 who

who gasped after nothing but slaughter and booty, roving and warlike as well by inclination as necessity, would have harassed by continual inroads, a people which had let them see that they were at once richer and weaker than themselves. The prudent firmness of the Senate, and the valour of Marius saved Rome for this time from the danger under which it afterwards sunk. All the citizens now turned their eyes towards the conqueror of Jugurtha, as their last and only support. They decreed him consular honours for the fourth time, and associated with him Catulus Lucatius, a person scarcely inferior to him in military skill, and who far excelled him in all the other qualities, which make a great statesman.

Marius having quickly discovered that the ill success of his predecessors was the effect of their imprudence, formed to himself a very different plan of conduct. In particular, he resolved not to join battle with the enemy, till their furious ardour was abated, and till his soldiers, familiarized to the sight of them, should no longer consider themselves as conquered before they came to blows. Their former victories, their tallness of stature, rendered still more terrible by their dress, their ferocious air, their barbarous shouts, and unusual manner of fighting, had all contributed to strike the Romans with the greatest terror; and this terror was the first enemy he had to encounter; an enemy which time alone could subdue. With this view, Marius judged it necessary to encamp on the banks of the Rhone, in a situation naturally advantageous,

geous, where he laid in all sorts of provisions in great abundance, that he might not be compelled to engage before he saw a convenient opportunity. This coolness of the general was regarded by those Barbarians as a mark of cowardice. They resolved, therefore, to divide themselves into different bodies, and so penetrate into Italy. The Cimbri and Tigurini went to meet Catulus; the Ambrónes and Teutones hoping to provoke the Romans to fight, came and encamped in a plain full in their front. But nothing could induce Marius to change his resolution.

Nevertheless, these Barbarians insulted the Romans incessantly by every means they could devise: they advanced as far as the very intrenchments of their camp, to reproach and deride them; they challenged the officers and the general himself to single combat. The Roman soldiers were by degrees accustomed to look their enemies in the face, while the provocations they received every day, more and more whetted their resentment. Many of them even broke out into reproaches against Marius for appearing so much to distrust their courage; and this dexterous general, to appease them, had recourse to a Syrian prophetess in his camp, who assured them that the Gods did not yet approve of their fighting.

At length, the patience of the Teutones was exhausted, and they endeavoured to force the Roman intrenchments; but here they were repulsed with loss: upon which, they resolved to abandon their camp, and attempt an irruption into Italy. They filed

off for six days together in the presence of Marius's army, insulting his soldiers with the most provoking language, and asking them, if they had any message to send to their wives, whom they hoped soon to see. Marius heard all these bravados with his accustomed coolness; but when their whole army was passed by, he followed them as far as Aix in Provence, harassing their rear-guard without intermission. When he was arrived at this place, he halted, in order to let his soldiers enjoy what they had ardently desired so long, a pitched battle. They began with skirmishing on both sides, till the fight insensibly growing more serious, at length both armies made the most furious attacks. Thirty thousand Ambrones advanced first, marching in a kind of measure to the sound of their instruments. A body of Ligurians, supported by the Romans, repulsed them with great loss: but as they betook themselves to flight, their wives came forth to meet them with swords and hatchets in their hands, and bitterly reproaching them, and striking indiscriminately friend and foe, endeavoured to snatch with their naked hands the enemies weapons, maintaining an invincible firmness even till death. This first action raised the courage of the Romans, and was the prelude to a victory still more decisive.

After the greatest part of the Ambrones had perished in that day's action, Marius caused his army to retire back to his camp, ordering them to keep strict watch, and to lye close without making any movement, as if they were affrighted at their own victory.

On

On the other hand, in the camp of the Teutones were heard continual howlings, like to those of savage beasts ; so hideous, that the Romans, and even their general himself could not help testifying their horror. They notwithstanding lay quiet that night, and the day following, being busily employed in preparing all things for a second engagement. Marius, on his part, took all necessary precautions ; he placed in an ambuscade three thousand men commanded by Marcellus, with orders to attack the enemy in the rear, as soon as they should perceive the battle was begun. When both armies were come within fight of each other, Marius commanded his cavalry to dismount ; but the Teutones, hurried on by that blind impetuosity which distinguishes all barbarous nations, instead of waiting till the Romans were come down into the plain, attacked them on an eminence where they were advantageously posted. At the same instant, Marcellus appeared suddenly behind with his troops, and hemming them in, threw their ranks into disorder, so that they were quickly forced to fly. Then the victory declared itself entirely in favour of the Romans, and a most horrible carnage ensued. If we may take literally what some of the Roman historians have* related, there perished more than a hundred thousand Teutones, including the prisoners. Others content themselves with saying, that the number of the slain was incredible ; that the inhabitants of Marseilles,

for

* See Plutarch's Life of Marius.

for a long time after, made inclosures for their gardens and vineyards with the bones ; and that the earth thereabouts was so much fattened, that its increase of produce was prodigious. Marius, loaded with glory, after a victory so illustrious in itself, and so important in its consequences, was a fifth time honoured with the consular fasces ; but he would not triumph till he had secured the repose of Italy, by the entire defeat of all the Barbarians. The Cimbri, who had separated themselves from the Teutones, still threatened its safety. They had penetrated as far as the banks of the Adige ; which Catulus Lucatius was not strong enough to prevent them from crossing. The progress they made still caused violent alarms in Rome ; Marius was charged to raise a new army with the utmost speed, and to go and engage them. The Cimbri had halted near the Po, in hopes that the Teutones, of whose fate they were ignorant, would quickly join them. Wondering at the delay of these their associates, they sent to Marius a second time, to demand an allotment of land, sufficient to maintain themselves and the Teutones their brethren. Marius answered them, that “ their brethren already possessed more
 “ than they desired, and that they would not easily
 “ quit what he had assigned them.” The Cimbri, irritated by this raillery, instantly resolved to take ample vengeance.

They prepared immediately for battle, and their king or general, named Bojorix, approached the Roman camp with a small party of horse, to challenge
 Marius,

Marius, and to agree with him on a day and place of action. Marius answered, that although it was not the custom of the Romans to consult their enemies on this subject, he would, notwithstanding, for once oblige them, and therefore appointed the next day but one, and the plain of Verceil for their meeting. At the time appointed, the two armies marched thither; the Romans ranged themselves in two wings: Catulus commanded a body of twenty thousand men, and Sylla was in the number of his officers. The Cimbri formed with their infantry an immense square battalion: their cavalry, consisting of fifteen thousand men, was magnificently mounted; each soldier bore upon his helmet the head of some savage beast, with its mouth gaping wide; an iron cuirass covered his body, and he carried a long halberd in his hand. The extreme heat of the weather was very favourable to the Romans. They had been careful to get the sun on their backs; while the Cimbri little accustomed to its violence, had it in their faces. Besides this, the dust hid from the eyes of the Romans the astonishing multitude of their enemies, so that they fought with the more confidence, and of course more courage. The Cimbri, exhausted and dispirited, were quickly routed. A precaution, which they had taken to prevent their being dispersed, only served to forward their ruin: they had linked the soldiers of the foremost ranks to one another with chains; in these they were entangled, and thereby exposed the more to the blows of the Romans. Such as could fly, met with new dangers

angers in their camp ; for their women who sat up, on their chariots, clothed in black, received them as enemies, and massacred without distinction their fathers, brothers and husbands : they even carried their rage to such a height, as to dash out the brains of their children ; and completed the tragedy, by throwing themselves under their chariot wheels. After their example, their husbands in despair turned their arms against one another, and seemed to join with the Romans in promoting their own defeat. In the dreadful slaughter of that day, a hundred and twenty thousand are said to have perished ; and if we except a few families of the Cimbri, which remained in their own country, and a small number who escaped, one may say. that this fierce and valiant nation was all mowed down at one single stroke. This last victory procured Marius the honours of a triumph, and the services he thereby rendered the commonwealth appeared so great, that he received the glorious title of third founder of Rome.

Thus have we given in a few words what historians relate of the expedition of the Cimbri ; it drew upon them for a moment, the attention of all Europe. But as literature, and the fine arts, can alone give lasting fame to a nation, and as we easily lose the remembrance of those evils we no longer fear, this torrent was no sooner withdrawn within its ancient bounds, but the Romans themselves lost sight of it, so that we scarcely find any farther mention of the Cimbri in any of their writers. Strabo only informs us,
that

that they afterwards sought the friendship of Augustus, and sent for a present a vase, which they made use of in their sacrifices ; and Tacitus tells us, in one word *, that the Cimbri had nothing left but a celebrated name, and a reputation as ancient as it was extensive.

Thus whatever figure this expedition made, we know but little the more of the nation which sent it forth. Nevertheless, what is related of their tall stature and ferocity deserves to be remarked, because if we may believe all the ancient historians of the north, and even many among the moderns, Scandinavia was peopled only with giants in those remote ages, which precede the epoch of history. The Icelandic mythology, which I shall have more than once occasion to quote, relates very exactly all the engagements which the giants had with those Scythians, whom Odin brought with him out of Asia.

They pretend that this monstrous race subsisted for a long time in the mountains and forests of Norway, where they continued even down to the ninth century ; that they fled from the open day, and renounced all commerce with men, living only with those of their own species in the solitudes and cliffs of the rocks ; that they fed on human flesh, and clothed themselves in the raw skins of wild beasts ; that they were so skilled in magic, as to be able to fascinate the eyes

* *Parva nunc civitas, sed gloria ingens, veterisque fama late vestigia manent.* Tacit. Germ. c. 37.

eyes of men, and prevent them from seeing the objects before them; yet were at the same time such religious observers of their word, that their fidelity hath passed into a proverb *; that in process of time, they intermixed with the women of our species, and produced demi-giants, who approached nearer and nearer to the human race, at length became mere men, like ourselves †. If all these circumstances are compared and examined, we shall find no great difficulty in clearing up the truth. When Odin and his companions came to establish themselves in the north, there is no doubt but the Cimbri, or original inhabitants of the country would stoutly dispute the possession of it with them. Afterwards, when they were conquered and driven out, the remains of this barbarous nation would be apt to take refuge among the rocks and deserts, where their rough and savage way of living ‡ could not but increase their native ferocity. The fear of being discovered by the conquerors, reduced them to the necessity of seeking by night the
only

* *Trollorum Fides.*

† *TORÆ. Hist. Norveg. Tom. I. Lib. 3. cap. 4. ARNG. JON. Crymogria. Lib. 1. p. 44.*

‡ The Asiatics brought with them into the north, a degree of luxury and magnificence, which were before unknown there. The author of an old Islandic chronicle, intituled *LANDNAMA-SAGA*,

speaking of a certain person, says,

“ that he was so well clothed, that
“ you would take him for one of
“ the [Ases] Asiatics.” P. 3. cap.
10. p. 102. apud Sperling. in nov.
liter. M. B. an. 1699. M. Jun.
Hence proceeded their contempt
for the ancient inhabitants of the
country, who were worse clad and
less civilized than themselves.

only provisions that were left them ; and as their tallness of stature, their cloathing of skins, and their savage air could not fail sometimes to make their conquerors tremble ; that hatred which is always mixed with fear, may have given birth to the charge of their being cannibals and magicians. Excess of fear fascinates and dazzles the sight more certainly than the forceries of which they were accused : and their enemies may have encouraged this opinion partly through superstition, and partly to set off their own courage. The probity for which this people was so famous, proves pretty plainly that the picture was over-charged. In process of time, the subject of these ancient wars was forgotten ; love performed the office of mediator between both people, their mutual shyness insensibly wore off, and as soon as they began to see one another more nearly, all these prodigies vanished away.

After all, I do not pretend to decide whether the first inhabitants of these countries were all of them, without any mixture, of Germanic origin, Cimbri and Teutones. For although to me this appears very probable with regard to Denmark, it cannot be denied that the Finns and Laplanders anciently possessed a much more considerable part of Scandinavia than they do at present. This was the opinion of Grotius and Leibnitz. According to them, these people were formerly spread over the southern parts of Norway and Sweden, whence in process of time, they have been driven out by new colonies of Scythians and

Germans, and banished among the northern rocks ; in like manner as the ancient inhabitants of Britain have been dispossessed by the Saxons of the greatest and most pleasant part of their island, and constrained to conceal themselves among the mountains in Wales, where to this day, they retain their language, and preserve some traces of their ancient manners. But whether the Finlanders were formerly the intire possessors of Scandinavia, or were only somewhat more numerous than they are at present, it is very certain that this nation hath been established there from the earliest ages, and hath always differed from the other inhabitants of the north, by features so strong and remarkable, that we must acknowledge their original to be as different from that of the others, as it is utterly unknown to us. The language of the Finns hath nothing in common with that of any neighbouring people, neither doth it resemble any dialect of the ancient ' Gothic,' Celtic or Sarmatian tongues, which were formerly the only ones that prevailed among the barbarous people of Europe. The learned, who have taken the pains to compare the great Finland bible printed at Abo, with a multitude of others, could never find the least resemblance between this and any other known language * ; so that
after

* Stiernhelm, a learned Swede, words, and still more Greek ones thought he discovered in the Fin- (Vid. Præfat. in Evangel. Gothica land tongue, many Hungarian 1671. 4to.) But what the author
says

after all their researches on this head, they have been obliged to propose mere conjectures, among which mankind are divided according to the particular light in which every one views the subject.

says above, may be notwithstanding the language; and Stiernhelm was
ing true of the general structure of probably fanciful. T.

CHAP.

CHAPTER III.

*The grounds of the ancient history of Denmark, and
of the different opinions concerning it.*

ON whatever side we direct our inquiries concerning the first inhabitants of Denmark, I believe nothing certain can be added to the account given of them above. It is true, if we will take for our guides certain modern authors, our knowledge will not be confined within such scanty limits. They will lead us step by step through an uninterrupted succession of kings and judges, up to the first ages of the world, or at least to the deluge: and there, receiving the descendants of Noah, as soon as they set foot out of the ark, will conduct them across the vast extent of deserts into Scandinavia, in order to found those states and kingdoms which subsist at present. Such is the scheme of Petreius, Lyschander, and other authors, who have followed what is called, among
Danish

Danish historians, the Gothlandic hypothesis*, because it is built upon some pretended monuments found in the isle of Gothland on the coast of Sweden: monuments which bear so many marks of imposition, that at present they are by common consent thrown aside among the most ill-concerted impostures.

The celebrated Rudbeck, a learned Swede, zealous for the glory of his countrymen, hath endeavoured no less to procure THEM the honour of a very remote original; as if, after all, it were of any consequence, whether a people, who lived before us so many ages, and of whom we retain only a vain resemblance of name, were possessed sooner or later of those countries, which we quietly enjoy at present. As this author joined to the most extensive learning an imagination eminently fruitful, he wanted none of the materials for erecting plausible and frivolous systems. He hath found the art to apply to his own country a multitude of passages in ancient authors, who probably had never so much as heard of its name. According to him, Sweden is the Atlantis of which Plato speaks,

* PETREIUS is a Danish author of the 16th century: LYSCHANDER was historiographer to king Christian IV. His work, printed in Denmark at Copenhagen in 1662, bears this title: "An abridgment of the Danish histories from the beginning of the world to our own times." The arguments on which these authors found their accounts did not merit the pains, which Torfaeus and others have taken to refute them. The reader may consult, on this subject, the last-cited writer in his "Series of kings of Denmark." Lib. i. c. 8.

speaks, and for this reason he assumed that word for the title of his book. He makes no doubt but Japhet himself came thither with his family, and he undertakes to prove the antiquity of the Scandinavians by the expeditions, which according to him they have undertaken in the remotest ages *. The first of these he places in the time of Serug, in the year of the world 1900 : the second under the direction of Hercules in the interval between the years 2200, and 2500. He lays great stress upon the conformity which is found between the names, manners and customs of certain nations of the South and those of the North, to prove that the former had been subdued by the latter ; which he affirms could never have been done, if Scandinavia had not been for a long time back overcharged, as it were, with the number of its inhabitants. It doubtless cannot be expected that I should go out of my way to encounter such an hypothesis as this : it is very evident that Rudbeck and his followers have falsely attributed to the Goths of Scandinavia, whatever the Greek or Latin historians have said of the Getae, or Goths, who dwelt near the Euxine sea, and were doubtless the ancestors of those people, who afterwards founded colonies in the North. And as to the arguments brought from a resemblance of names, we know how little these can be depended on. Proofs of this kind are easily found wherever they

* See Ol. Rudbeck. *Atlantica*, cap. xxiv.

they are fought for, and never fail to offer themselves in support of any system our heads are full of.

Having thus set aside these two pretended guides, there only remains to chuse between Saxo Grammaticus* and Thormod Torfæus. The first of these supposes that a certain person, named Dan, of whom we know nothing but that his father was named Humble, and his brother Angul, was the founder of the Danish monarchy, in the year of the world 2910: that from him Cimbria assumed the name of Denmark; and that it hath been ever since governed by his posterity. Saxo himself takes care to give us, in his preface, the grounds on which his account is founded. These are, first, the ancient hymns or songs,
by

* SAXO, surnamed on account of his learning, Grammaticus, or The Grammarian, wrote about the middle of the 12th century, under the reigns of Valdemar the First and Canute his son. He was provost of the cathedral church of Roschild, then the capital of the kingdom. It was the celebrated Absalon, archbishop of Lund, one of the greatest men of his time, who engaged him to write the history of Denmark; for which he furnished him with various helps. Saxo's work is divided into XVI books, and hath been many times printed. Stephanius published a very good edition of it at Sora, in

the year 1664, with notes which display a great profusion of learning. SWENO, the son of Agge contemporary with Saxo, wrote also, at the same time, and by the command of the same prelate, a history of Denmark, which is still extant. But this author seems rather to lean to the Icelandic hypothesis; for he differs from Saxo in many essential points, and in particular concerning the founder of the monarchy, who, according to him, was Skiold the son of Odin, the same who, according to the Icelandic chronicles, was the first king of Denmark.

by which the Danes formerly preserved the memory of the great exploits of their heroes, the wars and most remarkable events of each reign, and even sometimes the genealogies of princes and famous men. Secondly, the inscriptions which are found up and down in the North, engraven on rocks and other durable materials. He also lays great stress on the Icelandic chronicles; and on the relations which he received from archbishop Absalon. It cannot be denied but Saxo's work is written with great elegance for the time in which it was composed, but the rhetorician and the patriot are every where so apparent, as to make us sometimes distrust the fidelity of the historian. In short, to be convinced that this high antiquity, which he attributes to the Danish monarchy, is extremely uncertain, we need only examine the authorities on which he builds his hypothesis. Torfæus*, a native of Iceland, and historiographer of Norway, hath shewn this at large in his learned "Series of
of

* **THERMIDIUS TORFÆUS**, especially where he takes for his who was born in Iceland, in the last century, and died about the beginning of the present, had received his education at Copenhagen, and passed the greatest part of his life in Norway. He was a man of great integrity and diligence, and extremely conversant in the antiquities of the North, but perhaps a little too credulous,

especially where he takes for his guides the ancient Icelandic historians, upon whose authority he hath filled the first volumes of his history of Norway with many incredible events. His treatise of the Series of the Princes and Kings of Denmark contains many curious researches, and seems to me to be his best work.

" of kings of Denmark." He there proves that those songs, from which Saxo pretends to have extracted part of what he advanced, are in very small number; that he can quote none of them for many entire books of his history; and that they cannot exhibit a chronological series of kings, nor ascertain the date of any one event. Nor could the inscriptions, adds he, afford greater assistance to that historian; they contain very few matters of importance; they are for the most part eaten away with time, and are very difficult to understand *. With regard to the Icelandic chronicles; Torfæus thinks that they might have been of great use to Saxo, had he often consulted them; but this, notwithstanding his assertions, does not sufficiently appear, since they rarely agree with his relations. Finally, the recitals of archbishop Absalon are doubtless of great weight for the times near to those, in which that learned prelate lived; but we do not see from whence he could have drawn any information of what passed a long time before him. Upon

VOL. I.

F

the

* WORMIUS had read almost all those which are found in Denmark and Norway, as Verelius had also done the greatest part of those which subsisted, in his time, in Sweden. Both of them agree, that they scarce throw any light upon ancient history. To be convinced of this, one need only to examine the copies and explana-

tions they have given of them. See "OLAI WORMII Monumenta Runica." Lib. iv. and "OLAI VERELII Runographia Scandinavica antiqua," &c.—Since Verelius's work, there hath been published a compleat collection of all the inscriptions found in Sweden, by JOHN GORANSSON; at Stockholm, 1750. Folio.

the whole, therefore, Torfæus concludes with reason, that Saxo's first books, that is to say, nearly half his history, scarce deserve any credit so far as regards the succession of the kings, and the dates of the principal events, although they abound with various passages, which contribute to throw light on the antiquities of the North. Having thus overturned the hypothesis of that ancient historian, let us now see whether Torfæus is equally successful in erecting a new one in its stead.

The knowledge which this learned man had of the old Icelandic language, enabled him to read a considerable number of ancient manuscripts, which have been found in Iceland at different times, and of which the greatest part relate to the history of that island and the neighbouring countries. After having carefully distinguished those which appeared to him most worthy of credit, from a multitude of others which strongly favoured of fiction and romance, he thought he had found in the former, materials for drawing up a compleat Series of Danish kings, beginning with Skiold the son of Odin, who, according to him, began his reign a short time before the birth of Christ. Thus he not only cuts off from history all the reigns which, according to Saxo, preceded that æra ; but he changes also the order of the kings, which succeeded it ; affirming that Saxo had one while inserted foreign princes, another while lords or powerful vassals ; that he had represented as living long before Christ some who did not reign till many years after ; and that, in short,

short, he hath visibly enlarged his list of monarchs, whether with design to flatter his own nation by making the Danish monarchy one of the most ancient in the world, or whether he only too credulously followed the guides who seduced him.

It will appear pretty extraordinary to hear a historian of Denmark, cite for his authorities, the writers of Iceland, a country cut off, as it were, from the rest of the world, and lying almost under the northern pole. But this wonder, adds Torfæus, will cease, when the reader shall be informed, that from the earliest times the inhabitants of that island have had a particular fondness for history, and that from among them have sprung those poets, who, under the name of SCALDS, rendered themselves so famous throughout the North for their songs, and for the credit they enjoyed with kings and people. In effect, the Icelanders have always taken great care to preserve the remembrance of every remarkable event that happened not only at home, but among their neighbours the Norwegians, the Danes, the Swedes, the Scots, the English, the Greenlanders, &c. The first inhabitants of Iceland were a colony of Norwegians, who, to withdraw themselves from the tyranny of Harold Harfagre *, retired thither in the year 874 ; and these might carry with them the verses and other historical monuments of former times. Besides, they kept up such

* HARFAGRE is synonymous to our English FAIRFAX, and signifies FAIR LOCKS. T.

such a constant intercourse with the other people of the North, that they could readily learn from them whatever passed abroad. We must add, that the odes of these Icelandic Scalds were continually in every body's mouth, containing, if we may believe Torfæus, the genealogies and exploits of kings, princes, and heroes : And as the poets did not forget to arrange them according to the order of time, it was not difficult for the Icelandic historians to compose afterwards, from such memoirs, the chronicles they have left us.

These are the grounds of Torfæus's system : and one cannot help highly applauding the diligence and sagacity of an author, who has thrown more light on the first ages of Danish history than any of his predecessors. At the same time, we must confess, that there still remains much darkness and uncertainty upon this subject. For, although the annals of the Icelanders are, without contradiction, a much purer source than those which Saxo had recourse to ; and although the reasons alledged by Torfæus in their favour are of some weight ; many persons, after all, will hardly be persuaded that we can thence draw such exact and full information, as to form a compleat and firm thread of history. For, in the first place, the Icelandic writers have left us a great number of pieces which evidently shew that their taste inclined them to deal in the marvelous, in allegory, and even in that kind of narrations, in which truth is designedly blended with fable. Torfæus himself confesses

seles * that there are many of their books, in which it is difficult to distinguish truth from falsehood, and that there are scarce any of them but what contain some degree of fiction. In following such guides, there is great danger of being sometimes misled. In the second place, these annals are of no great antiquity: we have none that were written before christianity was established in the North: now, between the time of Odin, whose arrival in the North, according to Torfæus, is the first epoch of history, and that of the earliest Icelandic historian, elapsed about eleven centuries†. And therefore, if the compilers of the Icelandic annals found no written memoirs earlier than

* See his *Series Dynast. et Reg. lib. i. cap. 6.*

† This first Icelandic historian was ISLEIF, bishop of Scalholt, or the southern part of Iceland. He died in the year 1080. His collections are lost, but there is room to believe that ARE, the priest, who is surnamed the SAGE, made use of them to compose his Chronicles, part of which are still extant. This writer lived towards the end of the same century: as did also RÆMUND, surnamed the WISE or LEARNED, another Icelandic historian, some of whose works still remain. He had compiled a very voluminous mythology, the loss of which is much to

be regretted, since what we have of it, which is only a very short abridgment, throws so much light upon the ancient religion of the first inhabitants of Europe. SNORRO STURLESON is he of all their historians, whose works are most useful to us at present. He composed a Chronicle of the kings of Norway, which is exact as to the times near to his own. He was the chief magistrate or supreme judge of the kingdom of Iceland, and was slain in a popular insurrection, in 1241. With regard to the other Icelandic historians, the reader may consult Torfæus's *Series Dynast. et Regum Dan. lib. i.*

than their own, as we have great reason to believe, then their narratives are only founded on traditions, inscriptions, or reliques of poetry.

But can one give much credit to traditions, which must have taken in so many ages, and have been preserved by a people so ignorant? Do not we see that among the common class of men, a son remembers his father, knows something of his grand-father, but never bestows a thought on his more remote progenitors? With regard to inscriptions, we have already seen what assistance they were likely to afford: we may add that there are very few of them which were written before the introduction of christianity into the North; and, indeed, as we shall prove in the sequel, before that time very little use was made of letters. Lastly, as for the verses or songs which were learnt by rote, it cannot be denied, but the Icelandic historians might receive great information from them, concerning times not very remote from their own. But was a rough and illiterate people likely to bestow much care in preserving a great number of poems, through a succession of eight or nine centuries? Or can one expect to find in such compositions much clearness and precision? Did the poets of those rude ages observe that exactness and methodical order, which history demands? In the third place, if the Icelandic annalists could not know with certainty, what passed a long time before them in Iceland and Norway, must not their authority be still weaker in what relates to a distant state like that of Denmark; which

which doubtless in those times had not such intimate connections with the other countries of the North, as it hath had since? We must be sensible, that almost all that could be then known in Iceland of what passed in other nations, consisted in popular rumours, and in a few songs, which were handed about by means of some Icelandic Scald, who returned from thence into his own country.

What course then ought an historian to pursue, amid such a wide field of contrary opinions, where the momentary gleams of light do not enable him to discover or trace out any certain truth? In the first place, I think he ought not to engage himself and his readers in a labyrinth of entangled and useless researches; the result of which, he is pretty sure, can be only doubt. In the next place, he is to pass rapidly over all those ages which are but little known, and all such facts as cannot be set clear from fiction. The interest we take in past events is weakened in proportion as they are remote and distant. But when, besides being remote, they are also doubtful, unconnected, uncircumstantial and confused, they vanish into such obscurity, that they neither can, nor ought to engage our attention. In those distant periods, if any events occur, which ought not wholly to be past over in silence, great care should be taken to mark the degree of probability which appears to be due to them, lest we debase history by reducing it to one undistinguished mass of truth and fable. It is true, by conforming to this rule, an historian will leave great
chafms

chafms in his work, and the annals of eight or nine centuries which, in some hands, fill up several volumes, will by this means be reduced within very few pages. But this chafm, if it be one, may be usefully filled up. Instead of discussing the doubtful facts which are supposed to have happened among the Northern nations, during the dark ages of paganism, let us study the religion, the character, the manners and customs of the ancient inhabitants during those ages. Such a subject, I should think, may interest the learned, and even the philosopher: It will have to most readers the charm of novelty, having been but imperfectly treated of in any modern language: and so far from being foreign to the History of Denmark, it makes a very essential part of it. For why should history be only a recital of battles, sieges, intrigues and negotiations? And why should it contain merely a heap of petty facts and dates, rather than a just picture of the opinions, customs, and even inclinations of a people? By confining our inquiries to this subject, we may with confidence consult those ancient annals, whose authority is too weak to ascertain events. It is needless to observe, that great light may be thrown on the character and sentiments of a nation, by those very books, whence we can learn nothing exact or connected of their history. The most credulous writer, he that has the greatest passion for the marvelous, while he falsifies the history of his contemporaries, paints their manners of life and modes of thinking, without perceiving it. His simplicity, his ignorance,

are

are at once pledges of the artless truth of his drawing, and a warning to distrust that of his relations *. This is doubtless the best, if not the only use, we can make of those old reliques of poetry, which have escaped the shipwreck of time. The authors of those fragments, erected into historians by succeeding ages, have caused ancient history to degenerate into a mere tissue of fables. To avoid this mistake, let us consider them only on the footing of poets, for they were in effect nothing else; let us principally attend to and copy those strokes, which, without their intending it, point out to us the notions, and mark the character of the ages in which they lived. These are the most certain truths we can find in their works, for they could not help delivering them whether they would or not.

* This is the opinion of the learned BARTHOLIN, who hath written with so much erudition and judgment, upon certain points of the antiquities of Denmark. *eruendos, eis quoque evolvi posse codices existimaverim, quos fabulose interpersos narrationibus, in historia concinnanda baud tuto sequaris. Vid. Thom. Barthol. de Caus. &c. præf. Ad ritus, sive he, moresque antiquos fat.*

CHAPTER IV.

Of Odin, his arrival in the North, his conquests, and the changes which he made.

BEFORE I describe the state of ancient Scandinavia, I must stop one moment. A celebrated tradition, confirmed by the poems of all the northern nations, by their chronicles, by institutions and customs, some of which subsist to this day, informs us, that an extraordinary person named ODIN, formerly reigned in the north: that he made great changes in the government, manners and religion of those countries; that he enjoyed there great authority, and had even divine honours paid him. All these are facts, which cannot be contested. As to what regards the original of this man, the country whence he came, the time in which he lived, and the other circumstances of his life and death, they are so uncertain, that the most profound researches, the most ingenious conjectures

jectures about them, discover nothing to us but our own ignorance. Thus previously disposed to doubt, let those ancient authors, I have mentioned, relate the story : all their testimonies are comprized in that of SNORRO, the ancient historian of Norway, and in the commentaries and explications which TORFÆUS hath added to his narrative *.

The Roman Commonwealth was arrived to the highest pitch of power, and saw, all the then known world subject to its laws, when an unforeseen event raised up enemies against it, from the very bosom of the forests of Scythia, and on the banks of the Tanais. Mithridates, by flying, had drawn Pompey after him into those deserts. The king of Pontus sought there for refuge, and new means of vengeance. He hoped to arm against the ambition of Rome, all the barbarous nations his neighbours, whose liberty she threatened. He succeeded in this at first ; but all those people, ill-united as allies, ill-armed as soldiers, and still worse disciplined, were forced to yield to the genius of Pompey. ODIN is said to have been of this number. He was obliged to withdraw himself by flight from the vengeance of the Romans ; and to go seek in countries unknown to his enemies, that safety which he could no longer find in his own. His true name was Sigge, son of Fridulph ; but he assumed that of ODIN, who was the Supreme God among the Scythians :

* Vid. Snorro. Sturl. Chron. Norveg. in initio.—Torfæus Ser. Dynast. ac Reg. Dan. .II. p. 104. & seq.

Scythians: whether he did this in order to pass among his followers for a man inspired by the Gods, or because he was chief-priest, and presided over the worship paid to that Deity. We know that it was usual with many nations to give their pontiffs the name of the God they worshipped. Sigge, full of his ambitious projects, we may be assured, took care to avail himself of a title so proper to procure him respect among the people he meant to subject.

Odin, for so we shall hereafter call him, commanded the Ases, a Scythian people, whose country must have been situated between the Pontus Euxinus, and the Caspian sea. Their principal city was ASGARD*.

The

* The testimony of the Icelandic annalists is confirmed by that of several ancient authors, of whom it is not likely that they had any knowledge. Strabo places a city named Asburg in the very same country. L. 2. Pliny speaks of the Aseens, a people seated at the foot of mount Taurus. L. 6. c. 17. Ptolemy calls them Asiotes. Stephen of Byzantium intitles them Aspurgians [*Aspurgitani*.] Modern relations make mention also of a nation of Ases or Osses seated in the same country; and there is reason to believe, that the city of As-hof derived its name from the same source; this word signifies, in the Gothic language, the same as Asgard, or Asburg. [Vid. Beyer. in A.G. Acad. Petropol. Tom. 9. p. 387. & Dalin. S. R. Hist. T. 1. p. 101, & seqq.] But notwithstanding all this, it is still doubtful whether Odin and his companions came so far. Snorro is probably the author of this conjecture founded on the similitude of names. The most eminent chronicles, the poets, and tradition it is likely, said only, that Odin came from the country of the Ases: Now As in the Scythian language signifies a Lord, a God, and this name was in use among many Celtic nations. See Sueton. Aug.

The worship there paid to their supreme God was famous throughout the circumjacent countries; and it was Odin that performed the functions of it in chief, assisted by twelve other Pontiffs, (*Diar* or *Drottar*, a kind of Druids,) who also distributed justice *. O-
dia

c. 97. Af-gard then signifies the court or abode of God, and the resemblance of this name may have deceived Snorro. The learned

Eccard, in his Treatise of the Origin of the Germans, thinks that Odin came from some neighbouring country of Germany, where we find many names of places which are compounded of the word *As*, and it is possible that he may have sojourned there a long time, and formed establishments; though he or his nation came originally from some country of Scythia.

[Thus far our author in his second edition: in his first edit. he had observed that there was a striking resemblance between several customs of the Georgians, as described by Chardin, and those of certain Cantons of Norway and Sweden, which have best preserved the ancient manners. The learned Bishop Pontoppidan mentions several of these in his Nat. Hist. of Norway. Tom. 2. c. 10. §. 1, 2, 3. The Georgians (adds our author) possess at present one part

of the country, which was inhabited by the *Afcs*, whom Odin conducted into the North.]

* Among the several nations to whom these men distributed justice, the *TURKS* are often mentioned in the Icelandic chronicles. There was in effect, at the foot of mount *Taurus*, a Scythian people from the earliest times known by that name. Pomponius Mela mentions them expressly; [Lib. 1. cap. 19. towards the end.] Herodotus himself seems to have had them in his eye. [Lib. iv. p. 22.] One part of the *Turks* followed Odin into the north, where their name had long been forgotten by their own descendants, when other off-shoots from the same root, over-spreading the opposite part of Europe, revived the name with new splendour, and gave it to one of the most powerful empires in the world. Such strange revolutions have mankind in general undergone, and especially such of them, as long led a wandering unsettled life.—*First Edit.*

Odin having united under his banners the youth of the neighbouring nations, marched towards the north and west of Europe, subduing, we are told, all the people he found in his passage; and giving them to one or other of his sons for subjects. Thus Suarlamir was made king over a part of Russia: Baldeg over the western parts of Saxony or Westphalia: Segdeg had eastern Saxony, and Sigge had Franconia. Many sovereign families of the north are said to be descended from these princes *. Thus Horfa and Hengist, the chiefs of those Saxons, who conquered Britain in the fifth century, counted Odin or Woden† in the number of their ancestors: it was the same with the other Anglo-Saxon princes; as well as the greatest part of those of Lower Germany and the north. But there is reason to suspect that all these genealogies, which have given birth to so many insipid panegyrics and frivolous researches, are founded upon a mere equivocal, or double meaning of the word Odin. This word signified, as we have seen above, the Supreme God of the Scythians, we know also that it was customary with all the heroes of these nations to speak of

* Snorro Sturleson. Chron. Norveg. p. 4.

† ODIN, in the dialect of the Anglo-Saxons, was called WODEN or WODAN. The ancient chronicles of this people, particularly that published by Gibson, expressly assert that Hengist and Horfa

were descended from him. We find there ten or twelve genealogies of the English princes traced up to the same source: and the author concludes with this reflection: "It is from Odin that all our royal families derive their descent." V. p. 13.

of themselves as sprung from their divinities, especially their God of War. The historians of those times, that is to say the poets, never failed to bestow the same honour on all those whose praises they sung : and thus they multiplied the descendants of ODIN, or the supreme God, as much as ever they found convenient.

After having disposed of so many countries, and confirmed and settled his new governments, Odin directed his course towards Scandinavia, passing through Cimbria, at present Holstein and Jutland. These provinces, exhausted of inhabitants, made him no resistance ; and shortly after he passed into Funen, which submitted as soon as ever he appeared. He is said to have staid a long time in this agreeable island, where he built the city of ODENSEE, which still preserves in its name the memory of its founder. Hence he extended his arms over all the north. He subdued the rest of Denmark, and made his son Skiold be received there as king ; a title, which according to the Icelandic annals, no person had ever borne before, and which passed to his descendants, called after his name Skioldungians *. Odin, who was apparently better pleased to give crowns to his children, than to wear them himself, afterwards passed into Sweden, where at that time reigned a prince named Gylfe, who, persuaded

* If this name was not rather given them on account of the *SKIOLD* in the Danish language to *SHIELD*, which they were accustomed to bear, for this is called *this day.*—*First Edit.*

suaded that the author of a new worship, consecrated by conquests so brilliant, could not be of the ordinary race of mortals, paid him great honours, and even worshipped him as a divinity. By favour of this opinion which the ignorance of that age led men easily to embrace, Odin quickly acquired in Sweden the same authority he had obtained in Denmark. The Swedes came in crowds to do him homage, and by common consent bestowed the regal title and office upon his son Yngvön and his posterity. Hence sprung the Ynlingians, a name by which the kings of Sweden were for a long time distinguished. Gylfe died, or was forgotten. Odin governed with absolute dominion. He enacted new laws, introduced the customs of his own country; and established at Sigtuna, (a city at present destroyed, situate in the same province with Stockholm,) a supreme council or tribunal, composed of those twelve lords (*drottar*) mentioned above. Their business was to watch over the public weal, to distribute justice to the people, to preside over the new worship, which Odin brought with him into the north, and to preserve faithfully the religious and magical secrets which that prince deposited with them. He was quickly acknowledged as a sovereign and a God, by all the petty kings among whom Sweden was then divided; and he levied an impost or poll-tax upon every head through the whole country. He engaged on his part to defend the inhabitants against all their enemies, and to defray the

expence

expendence of the worship rendered to the gods at Sig-tuna.

These great acquisitions seem not however to have satisfied his ambition. The desire of extending farther his religion, his authority and his glory, caused him to undertake the conquest of Norway. His good fortune or address followed him thither, and this kingdom quickly obeyed a son of Odin named Sæmungve, whom they have taken care to make head of a family, the different branches of which reigned for a long time in that country. If all the sons of Odin were to have been provided for in the same manner, all Europe would not have afforded them kingdoms; for according to some chronicles, he had twenty-eight by his wife Frigga, and according to others, thirty-one or thirty-two.

After he had finished these glorious achievements, Odin retired into Sweden; where perceiving his end to draw near, he would not wait till the consequences of a lingering disease should put a period to that life, which he had so often bravely hazarded in the field: but assembling the friends and companions of his fortune, he gave himself nine wounds in the form of a circle with the point of a lance, and many other cuts in his skin with his sword. As he was dying, he declared he was going back into Scythia to take his seat among the other Gods at an eternal banquet, where he would receive with great honours all who should expose themselves intrepidly in battle, and die bravely with their swords in their hands. As soon

as he had breathed his last, they carried his body to Sigtuna, where, conformably to a custom introduced by him into the north, his body was burnt with much pomp and magnificence.

Such was the end of this man, whose death was as extraordinary as his life. The loose sketches which we have here given of his character, might afford room for many curious conjectures, if they could be depended on as well founded. Among those which have been proposed, there is nevertheless one which deserves some attention. Several learned men have supposed that a desire of being revenged on the Romans was the ruling principle of his whole conduct. Driven from his country by those enemies of universal liberty, his resentment, say they, was so much the more violent, as the Scythians esteemed it a sacred duty to revenge all injuries, especially those offered to their relations and country. He had no other view, according to them, in running through so many distant kingdoms, and in establishing with so much zeal his sanguinary doctrines, but to spirit up all nations against so formidable and odious a power. This leaven, which he left in the bosoms of the northern people, fermented a long time in secret; but the signal, they add, once given, they all fell as it were by common consent upon this unhappy empire; and after many repeated shocks, entirely overturned it; thereby revenging the affront offered so many ages before to their founder.

I cannot

I cannot prevail on myself to raise objections against so ingenious a supposition. It gives so much importance to the history of the North, it renders that of all Europe so interesting, and, if I may use the expression, so poetical, that I cannot but admit these advantages as so many proofs in its favour. It must after all be confessed, that we can discover nothing very certain concerning Odin, but only this that he was the founder of a new Religion, before unknown to the rude and artless inhabitants of Scandinavia. I will not answer for the truth of the account given of his original: I only suspect that at some period of time more or less early, either he, or his fathers, or the authors of his religion, came from some country of Scythia, or from the borders of Persia. I may add, that the God, whose prophet or priest he pretended to be, was named ODIN, and that the ignorance of succeeding ages confounded the Deity with his priest, composing out of the attributes of the one and the history of the other, a gross medley, in which we can at present distinguish nothing very certain. New proofs of this confusion will occur in all we shall hereafter produce on this subject; and it will behove the reader never to lose sight of this observation. I shall now mention some farther particulars recorded of Odin by the Icelandic writers; which will not only confirm what I have been saying, but give us some insight into his character.

One of the artifices, which he employed with the greatest success, in order to conciliate the respect of
the

the people, was to consult in all difficult emergencies the head of one MIMER, who in his life time had been in great reputation for his wisdom. This man's head having been cut off, Odin caused it to be embalmed, and had the address to persuade the Scandinavians, that by his enchantments he had restored to it the use of speech. He carried it every where about with him, and made it pronounce whatever oracles he wanted. This artifice reminds us of the Pigeon *, which brought to Mahomet the commands of heaven, and proves pretty plainly, that neither of these impostors had to do with a very subtle and discerning people. We find another feature of great resemblance in their characters, and that is the eloquence, with which both of them are said to have been gifted. The Icelandic chronicles paint out Odin as the most persuasive of men. They tell us, that nothing could resist the force of his words, that he sometimes enlivened his harangues with verses, which he composed extempore, and that he was not only a great poet, but that it was he who first taught the art of poetry to the Scandinavians. He was also the inventor of the Runic characters, which so long prevailed among that people. But what most contributed to make him pass for a God, was his skill in magic. He persuaded his followers, that he could run over the world in the twinkling of an eye, that he had the direction of the
air

* Yet this is now proved to be a fiction. See Sale's Preface to the Koran. T.

air and tempests, that he could transform himself into all sorts of shapes, could raise the dead, could foretell things to come, could by enchantments deprive his enemies of health and vigour, and discover all the treasures concealed in the earth. The same authors add, that he also knew how to sing airs so tender and melodious, that the very plains and mountains would open and expand with delight ; and that the ghosts attracted by the sweetness of his songs, would leave their infernal caverns, and stand motionless about him.

But if his eloquence, together with his august and venerable deportment, procured him love and respect in a calm and peaceable assembly, he was no less dreadful and furious in battle. He inspired his enemies with such terror, that they thought they could not describe it better, than by saying he rendered them blind and deaf ; that he changed himself into the shape of a bear, a wild bull, or a lion ; that he would appear like a wolf all desperate ; and biting his very shield for rage, would throw himself amidst the opposing ranks, making round him the most horrible carnage, without receiving any wound himself.

Some later historians seem to be a good deal puzzled how to account for these prodigies. In my opinion, the only thing that ought to astonish us, would be the weak credulity of the people whom Odin was able so to impose upon, if so many examples, ancient and modern, had not taught us how far ignorance is able to degrade all the powers of the human mind. For why need we suppose this famous leader ever
really

really employed the pretended science of magic, when we know in general that mankind hath been at all times and in all countries the dupes of the first impostor, who thought it worth his while to abuse them ; that the people who then inhabited Scandinavia were in particular plunged in the thickest clouds of ignorance ; that the historians who have transmitted to us the accounts of all these prodigies were Poets, figurative and hyperbolical in their language, fond of the marvellous by profession, and at that time disposed to believe it by habit. That the resemblance of names makes it very easy for us at this time to confound the descriptions given by ancient authors of their supreme Deity, with those which characterize this Asiatic Prince ; and finally, that the latter bringing along with him arts before unknown in the North, a luxury and magnificence thought prodigious in that rude country, together with great subtilty, and perhaps other uncommon talents, might easily pass for a God, at a time when there were so few real men ; and when the number of prodigies could not but be great, since they called by that name whatever filled them with surprise and wonder.

CHAPTER V.

A general idea of the ancient religion of the northern nations.

IT is not easy to form an exact notion of the religion formerly professed in the north of Europe. What the Latin and Greek authors have written on this subject is commonly deficient in point of exactness. They had for many ages little or no intercourse with the inhabitants of these countries, whom they styled Barbarians ; they were ignorant of their language, and, as ‘ most of these’ nations * made a scruple

* Particularly all those of Celtic origin. The author had expressed it simply “ As all the Celtic nations made a scruple,” sup-
posing the Gothic nations to be the same with the Celtic : but this opinion is considered in the preface.

ple of unfolding the grounds of their religious doctrines to strangers, the latter, who were thereby reduced to be mere spectators of their outward forms of worship, could not easily enter into the spirit of it. And yet if we bring together the few short sketches which these different writers have preserved of it, if we correct them by one another, if we compare their accounts with those of the ancient poets and historians of these nations themselves, I flatter myself, we shall throw light enough upon this subject to be able to distinguish the most important objects of it.

The religion of the Scythians was, in the first ages, extremely simple. It taught a few plain easy doctrines, and these seem to have comprized the whole of religion known to the first inhabitants of Europe. The farther back we ascend to the æra of the creation, the more plainly we discover traces of this conformity among the several nations of the earth; but in proportion as we see them dispersed to form distant settlements and colonies, they seem to swerve from their original ideas, and to assume new forms of religion. The nations, who settled in the southern countries, were they who altered it the first, and afterwards disfigured it the most. These people derive from their climate a lively, fruitful, and restless imagination, which makes them greedy of novelties and wonders: they have also ardent passions, which rarely suffer them to preserve a rational freedom of mind, or to see things coolly and impartially. Hence, the wild frenzies of the Egyptians, Syrians and
Greeks

Greeks in religious matters ; and hence that chaos of extravagances, in some respects ingenious, known by the name of mythology : through which we can hardly discover any traces of the ancient doctrines. And yet we do discover them, and can make it appear, that those first doctrines, which the southern nations so much disguised, were the very same that composed for a long time after all the religion of the Scythians, and were preserved in the North without any material alteration. There the rigour of the climate necessarily locks up the capricious desires, confines the imagination, lessens the number of the passions, as well as abates their violence, and by yielding only to painful and unremitted labour, wholly confines to material objects, that activity of mind which produces among men levity and disquiet.

But whether these causes have not always operated with the same efficacy, or whether others more powerful have prevailed over them, the greatest part of the Scythian nations, after having, for some time, continued inviolably attached to the religion of their first fathers, suffered it at length to be corrupted by an intermixture of ceremonies, some of them ridiculous, others cruel ; in which, by little and little, as it commonly happens, they came to place the whole essence of religion. It is not easy to mark the precise time when this alteration happened, as well for want of ancient monuments, as because it was introduced by imperceptible degrees, and at different times among different nations : but it is not therefore the

less certain, that we ought to distinguish two different epochs or ages in the religion of this people : and in each of these we should be careful not to confound the opinions of the sages, with the fables or mythology of the poets. Without these distinctions it is difficult to reconcile the different accounts, often in appearance contradictory, which we find in ancient authors. Yet I cannot promise to mark out precisely, what belongs to each of these classes in particular. The lights which guide us at intervals through these dark ages, are barely sufficient to shew us some of the more striking objects ; but the finer links which connect and join them together, will generally escape us.

Let us, first of all, examine this religion in its purity. It taught the being of a " Supreme God, master of the universe, to whom all things were submissive and obedient *." Such, according to Tacitus, was the supreme God of the Germans. The ancient Icelandic mythology calls him " The author of every thing that existeth ; the eternal, the ancient, the living and awful Being, the searcher into con-
" cealed

* No doctrine was held in higher reverence among the ancient Germans than this. *Regnator omnium Deus, cetera subiecta atque parentia*, says Tacitus, speaking of their religion. De Mor. Germ. c.

xxxv. The epithets that follow above are expressly given to the Deity in the old treatise of Icelandic mythology, intitled the EDDA, which has been mentioned above.

“ cealed things, the Being that never changeth.” It attributed to their deity “ an infinite power, a boundless knowledge, an incorruptible justice.” It forbade them to represent this divinity under any corporeal form. They were not even to think of confining him within the inclosure of walls *, but were taught that it was only within woods and consecrated forests, that they could serve him properly. There he seemed to reign in silence, and to make himself felt by the respect which he inspired. It was an injurious extravagance to attribute to this deity a human figure, to erect statues to him, to suppose him of any sex, or to represent him by images. From this supreme God were sprung (as it were emanations of his divinity) an infinite number of subaltern deities and genii, of which every part of the visible world was the seat and temple. These intelligences did not barely reside in each part of nature ; they directed its operations, it was the organ or instrument of their love or liberality

* *Cæterum nec cohibere parietibus Deos, neque in ullam humani oris speciem assimilare ex magnitudine celestium arbitrantur. Lucos ac nemora consecrant, Deorum quæ nominibus appellant secretum illud quod solâ reverentiâ vident.* Tacit. Germ. c. ix. One might here bring together a great multitude of authorities to

prove that so long as these † nations had no communication with strangers, their religion severely prohibited the use of temples, idols, images, &c. But it is sufficient to refer those, who would see this subject treated more at large, to M. Pelloutier's *Histoire des Celtes*, tom. ii.

† ‘ *The Celtic nations.*’ Orig.

rality to mankind. Each element was under the guidance of some Being peculiar to it. The earth, the water, the fire, the air, the sun, moon, and stars had each their respective divinity. The trees, forests, rivers, mountains, rocks, winds, thunder and tempests had the same ; and merited on that score a religious worship, which, at first, could not be directed to the visible object, but to the intelligence with which it was animated. The motive of this worship was the fear of a deity irritated by the sins of men, but who, at the same time, was merciful, and capable of being appeased by prayer and repentance. They looked up to him as to the active principle, which, by uniting with the earth or passive principle, had produced men, animals, plants, and all visible beings ; they even believed that he was the only agent in nature who preserves the several beings, and disposes of all events. To serve this divinity with sacrifices and prayers, to do no wrong to others, and to be brave and intrepid themselves, were all the moral consequences they drew from these doctrines. Lastly, the belief of a future state cemented and completed the whole building. Cruel tortures were there reserved for such as despised these three fundamental precepts of morality, and joys without number and without end awaited every religious, just, and valiant man.

These are the principal heads of that ancient religion, which probably prevailed for many ages through the greatest part of the north of Europe, and doubtless among several nations of Asia. It was preserved tolerably

terably pure in the North till towards the decline of the Roman republic: One may judge at least by the testimony of several authors, that the Germans had maintained till that time the chief of these doctrines; whilst the inhabitants of Spain, Gaul and Britain, half subdued by the arms and luxury of the Romans, adopted by degrees new Gods, at the same time that they received new masters *. It is probable then, that it was not till the arrival of Odin in the North, that the Scythian religion among the ancient Danes and other Scandinavians began to lose the most beautiful traits of its original purity. Though the fact itself is probable, it is not so easy to assign the causes of it. Whether this change must be attributed to the natural inconstancy of mankind, and their invincible proneness to whatever is marvellous, and strikes the senses: Or whether we ought to throw the blame on that conqueror, and suppose with some authors that he had a formed design to pass among the northern people for a formidable deity; and to found there a new worship, on which to establish his new dominion, and to eternize his hatred for the Romans, by planting among those valiant and populous nations a perpetual nursery of devoted enemies to every thing that should bear that name. It is difficult to decide this question. The eye is lost and bewildered, when it endeavours to trace out events so remote and obscure. To unravel and distinguish the several causes, and to

mark

* Pelloutier, chap. xvii.

mark exactly the distinct influence of each, is what we can hardly do in the history of such ages as are the most enlightened and best known to us. Let us then confine ourselves within more narrow limits, and endeavour to sketch out a new picture of this same religion, as it was afterwards altered, and like a piece of cloth so profusely overcharged with false ornaments, as hardly to shew the least glimpse of the original ground-work. This picture will take in a space of seven or eight centuries, which intervened between the time of Odin and the conversion of Denmark to the Christian faith. The Icelandic Edda, and some ancient pieces of poetry, wherein the same mythology is taught, are the sources whence I shall draw my information. But the fear of falling into needless repetitions, prevents me at present from describing the nature of these ancient works, which are known but to few of the learned. This discussion will find its most proper place in the article which I reserve for the ancient literature of the North.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the Religion which prevailed in the North, and particularly in Scandinavia, after the death of Odin.

THE most striking alteration in the doctrines of the primitive religion, was in the number of the Gods who were to be worshipped. A capital point among the Scythians, was that pre-eminence, I have been describing, of one only all powerful and perfect being over all the other intelligences, with which universal nature was peopled. The firm belief of a doctrine so reasonable had such influence on their minds, that they openly testified on several occasions their hatred and contempt for the polytheism of those nations, who treated them as Barbarians; and made it their first care to destroy all the objects of idolatrous worship in whatever place they established their authority.

thority *. But the descendants of these people being, in all appearance, weary of this simplicity of religion, associated to the supreme God many of those Genii or subaltern divinities, who had been always subordinate to him. As these differed rather in degree of power, than in essence, the transition was very easy to a people who were not very refined and subtle. To this another reason also contributed. As each of these inferior divinities governed with absolute power every thing within his respective sphere; fear, desire, all their wants, and passions inclined a rude people to have recourse to them, as to a more present, speedy and more accessible help in time of need, rather than to the supreme God, whose name alone imprinted so much respect and terror. It is an inevitable mistake of the human mind to carry the imperfections of its own nature into the idea it forms of the Deity. The deep conviction we have every moment of our own weakness, prevents us from conceiving how it is possible for one single being to move and support all parts of the universe. This is especially inconceivable to an ignorant people, who have never suspected that there is any connection between the several parts of nature, and that a general mechanism can produce so many

* They demolished the temples and statues of their Gods: this was done by the Persians (whose religion seems originally to have differed but little from that of the Scythians and 'Goths') when under the banners of Xerxes they entered Greece. See Cicero de legibus, L. 2.

many different phænomena. Accordingly, all barbarous nations have ever substituted, instead of the simple and uniform laws of nature which were unknown to them, the operation of spirits, genii and divinities of all kinds, and have given them as assistants to the supreme Being in the moral and physical government of the world. If they have paid to any of them greater honours than to others, it has usually been to those whose dominion extended over such things as were most dear to them, or appeared most worthy of admiration. This was what happened in Scandinavia. In process of time, that supreme Being, the idea of whom takes in all existence, was restrained to one particular province, and passed among the generality of the inhabitants for the God of war. No object, in their opinion, could be more worthy his attention, nor more proper to shew forth his power. Hence those frightful pictures which are left us of him in the Icelandic Mythology *, where he is always meant under the name of Odin. He is there called “ The terrible and severe God; the father of slaughter; the God that carrieth desolation and fire; the active and roaring deity; he who giveth victory, and reviveth courage in the conflict; who nameth those that are to be slain.” The warriors who went to battle, made a vow to send him a certain number of souls, which they consecrated to him; these souls were Odin’s right, he received them in VALHALL, his

VOL. I.

K

ordinary

* See the EDDA, Mythol. 3. & seq.

ordinary place of residence, where he rewarded all such as died sword in hand. There it was that he distributed to them praises and delight; there he received them at his table, where in a continual feast, as we shall see hereafter, the pleasures of these heroes consisted. The assistance of this Deity was implored in every war that was undertaken; to him the vows of both parties were addressed; and it was believed that he often descended to intermix in the conflict himself, to inflame the fury of the combatants, to strike those who were to perish, and to carry their souls to his celestial abodes.

This terrible Deity, who took such pleasure in shedding the blood of men, was at the same time, according to the Icelandic mythology, their father and creator. So easily do gross and prejudiced minds reconcile the most glaring contradictions: this same God, whom they served under a character that would make even a man abhorred, according to the EDDA *,

“ liveth and governeth during the ages, he directeth
 “ every thing which is high, and every thing which
 “ is low, whatever is great, and whatever is small;
 “ he hath made the heaven, the air, and man, who is
 “ to live for ever: and before the heaven and the
 “ earth existed, this God lived already with the gi-
 “ ants.” The principal strokes of this picture are found many times repeated in the same work. They have been frequently used by other northern poets.

Nor

* See Mythol. 3.

Nor were they peculiar to the inhabitants of Scandinavia. Many ancient people, the Scythians, and the Germans for example, attributed in like manner to the supreme God a superintendence over war. They drew their gods by their own character, who loved nothing so much themselves, as to display their strength and power in battle, and to signalize their vengeance upon their enemies by slaughter and desolation. Without doubt, this idea had taken deep root in the minds of the ancient Danes before the arrival of Odin. The expedition of the Cimbri plainly shows, that war was already in those early times become their ruling passion, and most important business: but it is nevertheless probable that this northern conqueror increased their natural ferocity, by infusing into minds so prepared the sanguinary doctrines of his religion. Without doubt, that intimate persuasion of theirs, that the supreme God appeared in battle; that he supported those who defended themselves with courage; that he fought for them himself; that he carried them away into heaven, and that this delightful abode was only open to such as died like heroes, with other circumstances of this kind was either the work of this ambitious prince, or only founded upon some events of his life, which they attributed to the supreme God, when they had once confounded them together *. The
apothecosis

* Abbe Banier says very sensibly, that we should always distinguish in the Gods of Antiquity, those whose worship has been antecedent

apotheosis of this Chief and his companions which followed it, involves the history of those times in great obscurity. The Icelandic mythology never distinguishes the supreme Being, who had been adored in the north under the name of Odin many ages before, from this prince of the Ases, who usurped his name and worship. All that one can just make shift to discover amidst so much darkness, is that the Scandinavians were not seduced by the impostures of the Asiatic Odin so far as to be generally persuaded, that he was the supreme God, whose name he had assumed, and to lose all remembrance of the primary belief. I think one may conjecture that it was principally the poets who delighted to confound these two Odins for the better adorning the pictures they drew of them both *. Mention is sometimes made of an ancient Odin, who never came out of Scythia, and who was very different from that other Odin that came into Sweden, and caused divine honours to be paid him at Sigtuna. Some authors make mention also of a third Odin, so that it is very possible this name may have been usurped by many different warriors out of policy and ambition ;
of

precedent to the existence of their great men, from those who having

been deified for some great actions, have been honoured with the same worship, as the Gods whose names they have taken.

See his mythology, Vol. 3. Book 7. c. 2.

* Wormii Monumenta Danica. Lib. 1. p. 12. Thorm. Torfœi Series Regum & Dynast. Dan. Lib. 2. c. 3.

of all whom posterity made in process of time but one single person ; much in the same manner as hath happened with regard to Hercules, in those rude ages when Greece and Italy were no less barbarous than the northern nations *. However that be, there remain to this day some traces of the worship paid to Odin in the name given by almost all the people of the north to the fourth day of the week, which was formerly consecrated to him. It is called by a name which signifies ODIN'S DAY † : For as this God was reputed also the author of magic, and inventor of all the arts, he was thought to answer to the Mercury of the Greeks and Romans, and the name of the day consecrated to him was expressed in Latin *Dies Mercurii* ‡.

The principal Deity among the ancient Danes, after ODIN, was FRIGGA or FREA, his wife. It was the opinion of all the ' Gothic ' nations, of the ancient Syrians, and of the first inhabitants of Greece, that the supreme Being or celestial God had united with the
Earth

* Several learned men have proved very clearly that the word HERCULES, was a name given to all the leaders of Colonies, who came out of Asia to settle in Greece, Italy and Spain. May not one conjecture with some probability, that the name of ODIN was given in like manner to all the leaders of Scythian colonies, who came from Asia to form settlements in the north ?

† It is called in Icelandic *Wonsdag*, in Swedish *Odinsdag*, in Low Dutch, *Woensdag*, in Anglo-Saxon, *Wodensdag*, in English, *Wednesday*, that is, the DAY of WODEN or ODIN. Vide Junii Etymologicor. Anglicanum. Fel. 1743. T.

‡ In French *Mardi*.

Earth to produce the inferior divinities, man, and all other creatures. Upon this was founded that veneration they had for the Earth, which they considered as a goddess, and the honours which were paid her. They called her **MOTHER EARTH**, and **MOTHER OF THE GODS**. The Phenicians adored both these two principles under the names of **TAUTES** and **ASTARTE**. They were called by some of the Scythian nations **JUPITER** and **APIA**; by the Thracians **CQRTIS** and **BENDIS**; by the inhabitants of Greece and Italy, **SATURN** and **OPS**. All antiquity is full of traces of this worship, which was formerly universal. We know that the Scythians adored the Earth as a goddess, wife of the supreme God; the Turks celebrated her in their hymns; the Persians offered sacrifices to her. Tacitus attributes the same worship to the Germans, particularly to the inhabitants of the north of Germany. He says, "They adore the goddess **HERTHUS** *," (meaning the "EARTH,") and gives a circumstantial description of the ceremonies which were observed in honour of her in an island, which he does not name, but which could not have been far from Denmark †. We cannot

* The name which Tacitus gives to this goddess, signifies the **EARTH** in all the northern (or Teutonic) languages. Thus it is in the ancient Gothic, *Airtha*: in the Angle-Saxon, *Eorthe*, *Ertba*, *Hertba*: English, *Earth*: in Danish, *Jord*: in Belgic, *Aerde*, &c. Vid. Junii Etymolog. Anglican. T.

† Cluverius pretends that it is the isle of **RUGEN**, which is in the Baltic sea, on the coast of Pomerania. Germ. Antiq. p. 134. Yet as Tacitus places it in the ocean, it

not doubt, but this same goddess was the Frigga of Frea of the Scandinavians. The word FREA or FRAU * signifies a woman in the German language. When, therefore, the Asiatic prince came into Denmark, and had found the worship of Odin and his wife the Earth established, there is no doubt but the same people, who gave him the name of ODIN or God, gave his wife also the name of FREA, consecrated to the Earth, and that they paid her the same compliment they had done her husband. Thus the same confusion which prevails in the descriptions given us of Odin, equally obtains in that of his wife; and without doubt the worship of both the one and the other underwent an alteration at this period. This Frea became, in the sequel, the goddess of love and debauchery, the Venus of the north, doubtless because she passed for the principle of all fecundity, and for the mother of all existence. It was she that was addressed in order to obtain

it is more likely to have been the isle of HEILIGELAND, which is not far from the mouth of the Elb. The ANGLES (*Angli*, from whom our English ancestors derived their name) were seated on this coast: and Arnkiel hath shown in his Cimbric Antiquities, that the ancient Germans held this island in great veneration. The word *Heiligeland*, signifies "Holy Land." See Pelloutier's *Hist. des Celtes*

Tom. 2. Chap. 18.—Other learned men pretend that the isle in question was ZEALAND, but it is after all, not very certain or important. Vid. Mallet's *First Edit.* T.

* The Lydians and other people of Asia minor acknowledged her under the name of *Rhea*, which is doubtless the same as *Frea* with a different aspiration. *First Edit.*

tain happy marriages and easy child-births. She dispensed pleasures, enjoyments and delights of all kinds. The Edda stiles her the most favourable of the goddesses; and in imitation of the Venus of the Greeks, who lived in the most tender union with Mars, Frea went to war as well as Odin, and divided with him the souls of the slain: and indeed it would have been very hard if the goddess of pleasures had been deprived of an amusement which her votaries were so fond of. It appears to have been the general opinion, that she was the same with the Venus of the Greeks and Romans, since the sixth day of the week which was consecrated to her under the name of Freytag, Friday, or Frea's day, was rendered into Latin *Dies Veneris*; or Venus's day *.

The third principal deity of the ancient Scandinavians was named THOR, and was no less known than the former among the 'Gothic' nations. Julius Cæsar speaks expressly of a God of the Gauls, who was charged with the conduct of the atmosphere, and presided over the winds and tempests †. He mentions
him

* She was also known under the name of *Astagod* or the goddess of love, a name which is not very remote from that of *Astarte*, by which the Phenicians denoted her; and under that of *Goya*, which the ancient Greeks gave to the earth. She was sometimes confounded with the Moon who was thought as well as her to have influence over the increase of the human species, for which reason the full moon was considered as the most favourable time for nuptials.

† Cæsar Comment. L. 6. c. 17.

him under the Latin name of Jupiter: But Lucan gives him a name, which bears a greater resemblance to that of Thor, he calls him Taranis, a word which to this day in the Welsh language signifies thunder *. It plainly appears, and is the express opinion of Adam of Bremen, that the authority of this God extended over the winds and seasons, and particularly over thunder and lightning †. In the system of the primitive Religion, the God Thor was probably only one of those genii or subaltern divinities, sprung from the union of Odin or the supreme Being, and the Earth. The Edda calls him expressly the most valiant of the sons of Odin ‡, but I have not discovered that the employment of launching the thunder was ever attributed to him. In reading the Icelandic mythology, I find him rather considered as the defender and avenger

VOL. I. L ger

* Pellout. Hist. des Celtes. Lib. 3. c. 6.

† *Thor præsidet in aere; fulmina, fruges gubernat.* (Adam Brem. Hist. Eccles. c. 233.) Dudo de St. Quentin observes the same thing of the Normans and Goths, adding that they offered human sacrifices. There was also a day consecrated to THOR, which still retains his name in the Danish, Swedish, English, and Low-dutch languages. [e. g. Dan. *Thorshag*, Sued. *Torsdag*. Eng. *Thursday*, Belg. *Don-derdag*. Vide Jun. E-

tym.] This word has been rendered into Latin, by *Dies Jovis*, or Jupiter's day; for this Deity, according to ideas of the Romans also, was the God of Thunder. In consequence of the same opinion, this day hath received a similar name in the dialect of High-Germany. It is called there by a name composed of the word *Pen* or *Pening*, which signifies the summit of a mountain, and the God, who presides (in that place) over thunder and tempest.

‡ Edda Mythol. 7.

ger of the Gods. He always carried a mace or club, which as often as he discharged it, returned back to his hand of itself; he grasped it with gauntlets of iron, and was further possessed of a girdle which had the virtue to renew his strength as often as was needful. It was with these formidable arms that he overthrew to the ground the monsters and giants, when the Gods sent him to oppose their enemies.

The three deities, whom we have mentioned, composed the court or supreme council of the gods, and were the principal objects of the worship and veneration of all the Scandinavians: but they were not all agreed among themselves about the preference which was due to each of them in particular. The Danes seem to have paid the highest honours to Odin. The inhabitants of Norway and Iceland appear to have been under the immediate protection of Thor: and the Swedes had chosen for their tutelar deity FREYA, or rather FREY, an inferior divinity, who, according to the Edda, presided over the seasons of the year, and bestowed peace, fertility and riches. The number and employment of these deities of the second order, it is not very easy to determine; and the matter besides, being of no great consequence, I shall only point out some of the most material. The Edda * reckons up twelve gods, and as many goddesses, to whom divine honours were due; and who, though they had all a certain power, were nevertheless obliged to obey
Odin

* Edda, Mythol. 18.

Odin the most ancient of the gods, and the great principle of all things. Such was NIORD *, the Neptune of the northern nations, who reigned over the sea and winds. This was one of those genii, whom the 'Goths' placed in the elements. The extent of his empire rendered him very respectable, and we find in the North, to this day, traces of the veneration which was there paid him. The Edda exhorts men to worship him with great devotion, for fear he should do them mischief: a motive like that which caused the Romans to erect temples to the FEVER: for fear is the most superstitious of all the passions †.

BALDER was another son of Odin, wise, eloquent, and endowed with such great majesty, that his very glances were bright and shining. TYR, who must be distinguished from THOR, was also a warrior deity, and the protector of champions and brave men ‡. BRAGE presided over eloquence and poetry. His wife, named IDUNA, had the care of certain apples, which
the

* Mythol. 21.

† Niord was the father of that Frey, the patron of the Swedes, whom I have mentioned above, and of Freya the goddess of beauty and love, who hath been confounded with Frea or Frigga, the wife of Odin. See the Edda, 20. *First Edit.*

‡ From Tyr is derived the name given to the third day of the week

in most of the northern languages, viz. in Dan. *Tyr/dag* or *Tiisdag*; Swed. *Tisdag*; English, *Tuesday*; in Low Dutch, *Dingf-tag*; in Latin, *Dies Martis*. This proves that Tyr answered to Mars. The Germans in High Dutch call this day *Erichs-tag*, from the word *Heric*, or *Harec*, a Warrior, which comes to the same thing.

the gods tasted, when they found themselves grow old, and which had the power of instantly restoring them to youth *. HEIMDAL was their porter. The gods had made a bridge between heaven and earth : this bridge is the Rain-bow. Heimdall was employed to watch at one of the extremities of this bridge, for fear the giants should make use of it to get into heaven. It was a difficult matter to surprise him, for the gods had given him the faculty of sleeping more lightly than a bird, and of discovering objects by day or night farther than the distance of a hundred leagues. He had also an ear so fine, that he could hear the very grass grow in the meadows, and the wool on the backs of the sheep. He carried in the one hand a sword, and in the other a trumpet, the sound of which could be heard through all the worlds. I suppress here the names of the other gods who made up the number of twelve ; but I ought to bestow a word upon LOKE, whom the ancient Scandinavians seem to have regarded as their evil principle, and whom notwithstanding they ranked among the gods. The Edda † calls him " the calumniator of the gods, " the grand contriver of deceit and frauds, the reproach of gods and men. He is beautiful in his figure, but his mind is evil, and his inclinations inconstant. No body renders him divine honours. " He surpasses all mortals in the arts of perfidy and craft." He hath had many children by SEGNIÆ his wife :

* Edda Mythol. 25.

† Mythol. 26.

wife: besides three monsters who owe their birth to him; the wolf FENRIS, the serpent MIDGARD, and HELA or Death. All three are enemies to the gods; who after various struggles, have chained this wolf till the last day, when he shall break loose and devour the sun. The serpent hath been cast into the sea, where he shall remain till he is conquered by the god Thor. And Hela or Death shall be banished into the lower regions, where she hath the government of nine worlds, into which she distributes those who are sent to her. We find here and there in the Edda several other strokes concerning Loke, his wars with the gods, and especially with Thor; his frauds, their resentment against him, and the vengeance they took of him, when he was seized and shut up in a cavern formed of three keen-edged stones, where he rages with such violence, that he causes all the earthquakes that happen. He will remain there captive, adds the same mythology, till the end of the ages; but then he shall be slain by Heimdall, the door-keeper of the gods.

We have seen above that the Icelandic mythology reckons up twelve goddesses, including Frea or Frigga, the spouse of Odin, and the chief of them all. Each of them hath her particular functions. EIRA is the goddess of medicine; GARFIONE of virginity: FULLA or FYLLA is the confidant of Frea, and takes care of her dress and ornaments. FREYA is favourable to lovers, but more faithful than the Grecian Venus, she weeps incessantly for the absence of her husband ODRUS, and
her

her tears are drops of gold. **LOFNA** makes up differences between lovers and married persons, though never so much at variance. **VARA** receives their oaths, and punishes such as violate them. **SNOTRA** is the goddess of learning, and of good manners. **GNA** is the messenger of **Frea**. Besides these twelve goddesses, there are other virgins in **VALHALL**, or the paradise of the heroes. Their business is to wait upon them, and they are called **VALKERIES**. **Odin** also employs them to chuse in battles those who are to perish, and to make the victory incline to whatever side he pleases. The court of the gods is ordinarily kept under a great ash-tree, and there they distribute justice *. This ash is the greatest of all trees ; its branches cover the surface of the earth, its top reaches to the highest heaven, it is supported by three vast roots, one of which extends to the ninth world, or hell. An eagle, whose piercing eye discovers all things, perches upon its branches. A squirrel is continually running up and down it to bring news ; while a parcel of serpents, fastened to the trunk, endeavour to destroy him. From under one of the roots runs a fountain wherein Wisdom lies concealed. From a neighbouring spring (the fountain of past things) three virgins are continually drawing a precious water, with which they water the ash-tree : this water keeps up the beauty of its foliage, and after having refreshed its leaves, falls back again to the earth, where it forms
the

* See the **EDDA** : Mythol. 14.

the dew of which the bees make their honey. These three virgins always keep under the ash; and it is they who dispense the days and ages of men. Every man hath a Destiny appropriated to himself, who determines the duration and events of his life. But the three Destinies of more especial note are URD (the past), WERANDI, (the present), and SCULDE, (the future).

Such were the principal deities, formerly worshipped in the north of Europe: Or rather these were the ideas which the poets gave of them to that credulous people. It is easy to discover their handy-work in these fictions, sometimes ingenious, but more frequently puerile, with which they thought to set off the simplicity of the ancient religion; and we ought not to believe, as we shall prove hereafter, that such of them as were men of sense and discernment ever considered them in any other light. But after having shewn the names and attributes of their principal Deities, let us proceed to set forth after the Edda and the poem named VOLUSPA *, the other Doctrines of their Religion.

We

* It is believed, that SÆMÖND, is still extant, and entitled VOLUSPA, that is to say, "The Oracle of the Prophets." It contains a very extensive Mythology, of which at present we have only an abstract of all the northern Mythology, and appears very ancient; but is not every where easy to be understood.
a poem of about 400 verses, which

We have seen that among the qualities of which they supposed Odin or the Supreme God to be possessed, that of the creator of heaven and earth is expressly attributed to him. It is very probable that most of the nations which were of 'Gothic' race held opinions similar to this, although the few monuments which remain at present of the 'Gothic' religion, leave us ignorant in what manner their Druids or their philosophers conceived this great event to have happened. What the Icelandic mythology hath preserved to us on this head, merits so much the more attention, as it discovers to us the sentiments of the ancient Scythians on this important point, and at the same time expresses them frequently with a greatness and sublimity equal to the finest strokes of classical antiquity on the same subject *. The poet begins by a description of Chaos. "In the day-spring of the
 "ages, says he, there was neither sea, nor shore, nor
 "refreshing breezes. There was neither earth be-
 "low, nor heaven above to be distinguished. The
 "whole was only one vast abyss without herb, and
 "without seeds. The sun had then no palace: the
 "stars knew not their dwelling-places, the moon was
 "ignorant of her power." After this, continues he,
 "there

* I quote as much as possible only a kind of paraphrase of this the very words of the *VOLUSPA*, poem. See especially *Mythol.* 4, and when they appear to me too 5, & seq. *Edd. Island. Resenii.* obscure, I supply them from the *Havniac, 1665. First Edit.* *EDDA*, which is, for the most part,

" there was a luminous, burning, flaming world to-
 " wards the south; and from this world flowed out
 " incessantly into the abyfs that lay towards the
 " north, torrents of sparkling fire, which in propor-
 " tion as they removed far away from their source,
 " congealed in their falling into the abyfs, and so
 " filled it with scum and ice. Thus was the abyfs by
 " little and little filled quite full: but there remain-
 " ed within it a light and immoveable air, and thence
 " exhaled icy vapours. Then a warm breath com-
 " ing from the south, melted those vapours, and
 " formed of them living drops, whence was born the
 " giant YMER. It is reported, that whilst he slept,
 " an extraordinary sweat under his arm-pits produ-
 " ced a male and female, whence is sprung the race
 " of the giants; a race evil and corrupt, as well as
 " Ymer their author. Another race was brought
 " forth, which formed alliances with that of the gi-
 " ant Ymer: This was called the family of BOR, so
 " named from the first of that family, who was the
 " father of Odin. The sons of Bor slew the giant
 " Ymer, and the blood ran from his wounds in such
 " abundance, that it caused a general inundation,
 " wherein perished all the giants, except only one,
 " who saving himself in a bark, escaped with all his
 " family. Then a new world was formed. The
 " sons of Bor, or the Gods, dragged the body of the
 " giant into the abyfs, and of it made the earth: the
 " sea and rivers were composed of his blood; the
 " earth of his flesh; the great mountains of his
 Vol. I. M " bones;

“ bones ; the rocks of his teeth, and of splinters of
 “ his bones broken. They made of his scull the
 “ vault of heaven, which is supported by four dwarfs
 “ named South, North, East, and West. They fixed
 “ there tapers to enlighten it, and assigned to other
 “ fires certain spaces which they were to run thro’,
 “ some of them in heaven, others under the heaven :
 “ The days were distinguished, and the years were
 “ numbered. They made the earth round, and sur-
 “ rounded it with the deep ocean, upon the banks of
 “ which they placed the giants. One day, as the
 “ sons of Bor, or the gods, were taking a walk, they
 “ found two pieces of wood floating upon the wa-
 “ ter ; these they took, and out of them made a man
 “ and a woman. The eldest of the gods gave them
 “ life and souls ; the second motion and knowledge ;
 “ the third the gift of speech, hearing, and sight, to
 “ which he added beauty and raiment. From this
 “ man and this woman, named ASKUS and EMBLA, is
 “ descended the race of men who are permitted to in-
 “ habit the earth.”

It is easy to trace out in this narration vestiges of
 an ancient and general tradition, of which every sect
 of paganism hath altered, adorned or suppressed many
 circumstances, according to their own fancy, and
 which is now only to be found intire in the books of
 Moses. Let the strokes we have here produced be
 compared with the beginning of Hesiod’s Theogony,
 with the mythology of some Asiatic nations, and with
 the book of Genesis, and we shall instantly be convin-
 ced,

ced, that the conformity which is found between many circumstances of their recitals, cannot be the mere work of chance. Thus in the Edda the description of the Chaos ; that vivifying breath which produces the giant Ymier ; that sleep during which a male and female spring from his sides ; that race of the sons of the gods ; that deluge which only one man escapes, with his family, by means of a bark ; that renewal of the world which succeeds ; that first man and first woman created by the gods, and who receive from them life and motion : all this seems to be only remains of a more ancient and more general belief, which the Scythians carried with them when they retired into the North, and which they altered more slowly than the other nations. One may discover also in the very nature of these alterations the same spirit of allegory, the same desire of accounting for all the phenomena of nature by fictions, which hath suggested to other nations the greatest part of the fables with which their theology is infected. To conclude, the style itself, in which the expressions, one while sublime, one while extravagant and gigantic, are thrown together without art ; the littleneſſes that accompany the most magnificent descriptions ; the disorder of the narrative ; the uniform turn of the phrases, confirms to all who read this work, an idea of a very remote antiquity, and a mode of thinking and writing peculiar to a simple and groſs people, who were unacquainted with any rules of composition, and whose vigorous imagination, deſpising or not knowing any

any rules of art, displays itself in all the freedom and energy of nature.

It was thus the world was created; or to express it in a manner, more conformable to the 'Gothic' notions, It was thus that the matter already existing, but without order and without life, was animated and disposed by the Gods into the present state in which we behold it. I have already remarked, that they were far from supposing that after it had received the first motion from the hands of the Gods, the world continued to subsist, and to move independent of its first movers. Perhaps no religion ever attributed so much to a divine providence as that of the northern nations. This doctrine served them for a key, as commodious, as it was universal, to unlock all the phænomena of nature without exception. The intelligencies united to different bodies, penetrated and moved them; and men needed not to look any farther than to them, to find the cause of every thing they observed in them. Thus entire Nature, animated and always moved immediately by one or more intelligent causes, was in their system nothing more than the organ or instrument of the divinity, and became a kind of book in which they thought they could read his will, inclinations and designs. Hence that weakness formerly common to so many nations, and of which the traces still subsist in many places, that makes them regard a thousand indifferent phænomena, such as the quivering of leaves, the crackling and colour of flames, the fall of thunderbolts, the flight or singing of a bird,

mens

mens involuntary motions, their dreams and visions, the movements of the pulse, &c. as intimations which God gives to wise men, of his will. Hence came oracles, divinations, auspices, presages, and lots; in a word, all that rubbish of dark superstitions, called at one time religion, at another magic, a science absurd to the eyes of reason, but suitable to the impatience and restlessness of our desires, and which only betrays the weakness of human nature, in promising to relieve it. Such, notwithstanding, was the principal consequence which the 'Gothic' nations drew from the doctrine of a Divine Providence. The ancient Danes carried it to as extravagant a pitch as the rest, as will appear from what I shall say of their sacrifices and presages, when I come to treat of their exterior worship. With respect to the moral precepts, we know very well that it hath ever been the failing of mankind to regard these as the least essential part of religion. When they admitted that continual and immediate action of the divinity on all creatures, the Scandinavians had thence concluded that it was impossible for men to effect any change in the course of things, or to resist the destinies. The Stoics themselves did not understand this term in a more rigorous sense than the people of the North. Nothing is more common in the ancient Chronicles than to hear their warriors complaining that the destinies are inflexible, that they are unalterable, and cannot be surmounted. We have seen above that they reckoned the Parcs or Goddesses of destiny to be three in number

ber, as well as the Greeks; and like them attributed to them the determination of all events. Every man had also his own destiny, who assisted at the moment of his birth, and marked before hand the period of his days *. It is yet probable that they considered Odin or the supreme God, as the author and arbiter of the destinies. This the Edda insinuates pretty clearly, when it tells us, that he hath established from the beginning governors to regulate the destinies of mortals. One may conceive what impression this doctrine must have made upon men who were naturally warlike. Recent examples have shewn us, that it never fails among men to add strength to their ruling passion, and to produce particularly in such as love war, a blind temerity which knows neither measure nor danger †. But to this unlucky prejudice the ancient inhabitants of the north added another, the effects of which were no less barbarous: which was, that the term of a man's life might be prolonged, if any one would put himself in his place and die in his stead. This was often practised when a prince or illustrious warrior was ready to perish by some accident;

* It is this doctrine of the ancient 'Gothic' (or northern) Mythology, which has produced all the stories of fairies, and the marvellous of modern Romances, as that of the ancient Romances, is founded on the Greek and Roman Mythology. This will appear more plainly in the sequel of this work.

† The author (I suppose) alludes to Charles XII. of Sweden. See his History by Voltaire. T.

deat; Odin appeased by such a sacrifice, and content to have a victim, revoked, they said, the decree of the destinies, and lengthened the thread of his life whom they were so desirous to save.

The other precepts of this religion * probably extended no farther than to be brave and intrepid in war, to serve the Gods, and to appease them by sacrifices; not to be unjust, to show hospitality to strangers, to keep their words inviolably, and to be faithful to the marriage bed. There are many remarks to be made upon the sense in which these precepts were taken, and upon the manner in which they were observed; but to avoid repetitions, I shall reserve them for the article in which I shall treat of the Manners of the ancient Danes: There we shall be best able to judge, what influence their religion had upon these people, and by a natural circle, thence form the most exact idea of the spirit of the religion itself. It is now time to discuss another of its doctrines, that of the state of man after death, and the final destiny of the world he now inhabits.

“ There will come a time, says the Edda †, a barbarous age, an age of the sword, when iniquity shall infest the earth, when brothers shall stain themselves

* As among all the ‘ Gothic ’ nations. Orig.

† See Mythol. 48. and 49. and the Poem of the VOLUSPA towards the end, as it is found in the Edit.

of Resenius. See also the fragments cited by Bartholin. De Cauf. Contempt. a Dan. Gentil. mortis. L. 2. c. 34.

“ themselves with brothers blood, when sons shall be
 “ the murderers of their fathers, and fathers of their
 “ sons, when incest and adultery shall be common,
 “ when no man shall spare his friend. Immediately
 “ shall succeed a desolating winter; the snow shall
 “ fall from the four corners of the world, the winds
 “ shall blow with fury, the whole earth shall be hard
 “ bound in ice. Three such winters shall pass away,
 “ without being softened by one summer. Then shall
 “ succeed astonishing prodigies: Then shall the mon-
 “ sters break their chains and escape: the great Dra-
 “ gon shall roll himself in the ocean, and with his
 “ motions the earth shall be overflowed: the earth
 “ shall be shaken; the trees shall be torn up by the
 “ roots; the rocks shall be dashed against each other.
 “ The Wolf Fenris, broke loose from his chains, shall
 “ open his enormous mouth which reaches from hea-
 “ ven to earth; the fire shall flash out from his eyes
 “ and nostrils; he shall devour the sun: and the great
 “ Dragon who follows him, shall vomit forth upon
 “ the waters, and into the air, great torrents of ve-
 “ nom. In this confusion the stars shall fly from their
 “ places, the heaven shall cleave asunder, and the ar-
 “ my of evil Genii and Giants, conducted by SORTUR,
 “ (the black) and followed by LOKE, shall break in,
 “ to attack the gods. But HEIMDAL, the door-keep-
 “ er of the gods, rises up, he sounds his clanging
 “ trumpet; the gods awake and assemble; the great
 “ Ash-tree shakes its branches; heaven and earth are
 “ full of horror and affright. The gods fly to arms;
 “ the

“ the heroes place themselves in battle-array. Odin
 “ appears armed in his golden casque, and his re-
 “ splendent cuirass: his vast scimeter is in his hands.
 “ He attacks the Wolf Fenris; he is devoured by
 “ him, and Fenris perishes at the same instant. Thor
 “ is suffocated in the floods of venom which the Dra-
 “ gon breathes forth as he expires. Loke and Heim-
 “ dal mutually kill each other *. The fire consumes
 Vol. I. N “ every

* It is very difficult to comprehend why the Scandinavians make their Gods to die thus, without ever returning again to life: For after the defeat of the three principal divinities, we see an All-powerful Deity appear upon the stage, who seems to have nothing in common with ODIN. The Stoics had probably the same ideas: there is at least a very remarkable passage of Seneca the tragedian on this subject. It is where he describes that conflagration which is to put an end to this world.

Jam jam legibus obrutis
 Mundo cum veniet dies
 Australis polus obruet
 Quicquid per Lybiam jacet, &c.
 Arcticus polus obruet
 Quicquid subjacet aribus.
 Amissum trepidus polo
 Titan excutiet diem.
 Coeli regia concidens
 Ortus atque obitus trahet
 Atque omnes pariter Deos
 Perdet mors aliqua, et Chaos
 Et mors et fata novissima
 In se constituet sibi
 Quis mundum capiet locus?

" every thing, and the flame reaches up to heaven,
 " But presently after, a new earth springs forth from
 " the bosom of the waves, adorned with green mea-
 " dows; the fields there bring forth without cul-
 " ture, calamities are there unknown, a palace is
 " there raised more shining than the sun, all covered
 " with gold. This is the place that the just will in-
 " habit, and enjoy delights for evermore. Then the
 " POWERFUL, the VALIANT, he WHO GOVERNS ALL
 " THINGS, comes forth from his lofty abodes, to ren-
 " der divine justice. He pronounces decrees. He
 " establishes the sacred destinies which shall endure
 " for ever. There is an abode remote from the sun,
 " the gates of which face the North; poison rains
 " there through a thousand openings: This place is
 " all composed of the carcases of Serpents: There
 " run certain torrents, in which are plunged the per-
 " jurers, assassins, and those who seduce married wo-
 " men. A black winged Dragon flies incessantly a-
 " round, and devours the bodies of the wretched who
 " are there imprisoned."

Notwith-

So remarkable a conformity seems to suppose that the two systems had one common original, nor would it be astonishing if they had. There were among the barbarous nations Sages of great repute, as is acknowledged by the Greeks and Romans themselves,

strongly prejudiced as they were against them: And it is very probable that more than one philosopher had picked up among the Scythians or Thracians, considerable information, especially with regard to religion and morality.

First Edit.

Notwithstanding the obscurities which are found in these descriptions, we see that it was a doctrine rendered sacred by the religion of the ancient Scandinavians, that the soul was immortal, and that there was a future state reserved for men, either happy or miserable, according to their behaviour here below. All the ' Gothic and' Celtic nations held the same opinions, and it was upon these they founded the obligation of serving the Gods, and of being valiant in battle: But although the Greek and Latin historians who have spoke of this people, agree in attributing these notions to them, yet none of them have given any particular account of the nature of these doctrines; and one ought to regard in this respect the Icelandic mythology as a precious monument, without which we can know but very imperfectly this important part of the religion of our fathers. I must sacrifice to brevity many reflections, which the picture I have here copied from thence, naturally presents to the mind. Many in particular would arise on the surprizing conformity that there is between several of the foregoing strokes, and those employed in the Gospel to describe the same thing. A conformity so remarkable, that one should be tempted to attribute it to the indiscreet zeal of the Christian writer who compiled this mythology, if the Edda alone had transmitted to us this prophecy concerning the last ages of the world, and if we did not find it with the same circumstances in the VOLUSPA, a poem of greater antiquity,



quity, and in which nothing can be discovered that has an air of interpolation, or forgery.

One remark, however, ought not to be omitted, which is, that this mythology expressly distinguishes two different abodes for the happy, and as many for the culpable: Which is what several authors who have writ of the ancient religion of Europe, have not sufficiently attended to. The first of these abodes was the palace of Odin named VALHALLA, where that God received all such as died in a violent manner, from the beginning to the end of the world, that is, to the time of that universal desolation of nature which was to be followed by a new creation, and what they called RAGNAROCKUR, or the Twilight of the Gods. The second, which after the renovation of all things, was to be their eternal abode, was named GIMLE, that is, the Palace covered with Gold, the description of which we have seen above, where the just were to enjoy delights for ever. It was the same as to the place of punishments; they distinguished two of those, of which the first named NIFLHEIM*, was only to continue to the renovation of the world, and the second that succeeded it, was to endure for ever. This last was named NASTROND†: and we have seen in the description of the end of the world, what idea was entertained of it by the ancient Danes. With regard to the two first places, the VALHALLA and NIFL-

HEIM,

* This word signifies the abode of the wicked, from the island *Niff*, evil, and *Heim*, home.

† The shore of the dead.

ÆRIM, they are not only distinguished from the others, in being only to endure till the conflagration of the world, but also in that they seem rather intended to reward violence than virtue, and rather to stifle all the social affections than to deter men from crimes. Those only, whose blood had been shed in battle, might aspire to the pleasures which Odin prepared for them in **VALHALLA**. The pleasures which they expected after death, shew us plainly enough what they relished during life. "The heroes, says the *Ed-*
da *, who are received into the palace of Odin,
 " have every day the pleasure of arming themselves,
 " of passing in review, of ranging themselves in order
 " of battle, and of cutting one another in pieces; but
 " as soon as the hour of repast approaches, they re-
 " turn on horseback all safe and sound, back to the
 " Hall of Odin, and fall to eating and drinking.
 " Though the number of them cannot be counted;
 " the flesh of the boar **SERIMNER** is sufficient for
 " them all; every day it is served up at table, and
 " every day it is renewed again intire: their beve-
 " rage is beer and mead; one single goat, whose milk
 " is excellent mead, furnishes enough of that liquor
 " to intoxicate all the heroes: their cups are the
 " skulls of enemies they have slain. Odin alone, who
 " sits at a table by himself, drinks wine for his entire
 " liquor. A crowd of virgins wait upon the heroes
 " at table, and fill their cups as fast as they empty
 " them."

* *Edda Iceland. Mythol.* 31, 33, 34, 35.

“ them.” Such was that happy state, the bare hope of which rendered all the inhabitants of the North of Europe intrepid, and which made them not only to defy, but even seek with ardour the most cruel deaths. Accordingly, King Regner Lodbrog* when he was going to die, far from uttering groans, or forming complaints, expressed his joy by these verses. “ We ‘are’ cut to pieces with swords: but this fills me with joy, when I think of the feast that is preparing for me in Odin’s palace. Quickly, quickly seated in the splendid habitation of the Gods, we shall drink beer out of the skulls of our enemies. A brave man fears not to die. I shall utter no timorous words as I enter the Hall of Odin.” This fanatic hope derived additional force from the ignominy affixed to every kind of death but such as was of a violent nature, and from the fear of being sent after such an exit into NIFLHEIM. This was a place consisting of nine worlds, reserved for those that died of disease or old age. HELA or Death, there exercised her despotic power; her palace was ANGUISH; her table FAMINE; her waiters were EXPECTATION and DELAY; the threshold of her door was PRECIPICE; her bed LEANNESS: she was livid and ghastly pale; and her very looks inspired horror.

After this description of the religion of the Scandinavians,

* See “ Five Pieces of Runic Olavi Wormii Literatur. Run. ad “ Poetry, translated from the Icelandic.
“ landic.” Lond. 1763. 8vo.—

navians, can we be surprized that they should make war their only business, and carry their valour to the utmost excesses of fanaticism. Such also will be the features which I shall most frequently have occasion to present, when I come to give a picture of their manners : there the influence of a doctrine so pernicious will be felt in its utmost extent. But justice obliges me to observe here, that the reproach arising from it does not affect the ancient inhabitants of the North more than those of all Europe in general, unless it be that they continued to deserve it longer. However strange to a man, who reasons coolly, may appear the madness of making war habitually, for the sake of war itself : it must, notwithstanding, be allowed, that this hath been for a succession of ages the favourite passion of all those nations at present so polite ; and it is but, as it were, of yesterday that they began to be sensible of the value of peace, of the cultivation of arts, and of a government favourable to industry. The farther we look back towards their infancy, the more we see them occupied in war, divided among themselves, cruelly bent on the destruction of each other, by a spirit of revenge, idleness and fanaticism. There was a time when the whole face of Europe presented the same spectacle as the forests of America ; viz. a thousand little wandering nations, without cities or towns, or agriculture, or arts : having nothing to subsist on but a few herds, wild fruits and pillage, harassing themselves incessantly by inroads and attacks, sometimes conquering, sometimes conquered,

conquered, often totally overthrown and destroyed. The same causes every where produce the same effects : a savage life necessarily produces cruelty and injustice ; disquiet, idleness, and envy naturally lead to violence, and the desire of rapine and mischief. The fear of death is no restraint when life has no comfort. What evidently proves the unhappiness of those nations who live in such a state as this, is the facility with which they throw their lives away. The pleasure arising from property, from sentiment and knowledge, the fruits of industry, laws and arts, by softening life, and endearing it to us, can alone give us a relish for peace and justice.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VII.

*Of the exterior worship and religious ceremonies of the
Northern nations.*

IN laying open the principal doctrines of the ancient Danes, I have already had frequent occasion to remark their conformity with those of the other 'Gothic and' Celtic nations of Europe. The same conformity is observable in the worship which they paid the Deity ; and one may presume that it would appear still greater if it were easy to pursue with exactness, the history of that religion through its several stages of purity and alteration. Thus, for instance, it is easy to comprehend why the ancient Danes made use of temples ; although, on the other hand, it is very certain, that the use of them was proscribed by

the primitive religion, which taught that it was offensive to the gods to pretend to inclose them within the circuit of walls ; and that men thereby checked and restrained their action, which is to penetrate all creatures freely in order to support them in being. There was doubtless a time, when the Danes, admitting the same doctrine, worshipped their divinities only in open air, and either knew not, or approved not of the use of temples. Although we want the greatest part of the monuments which might instruct us concerning that stage of their religion, the traces of it are not yet entirely destroyed. We find at this day here and there in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, in the middle of a plain, or upon some little hill, altars, around which they assembled to offer sacrifices, and to assist at other religious ceremonies. The greatest part of these altars are raised upon a little hill, either natural or artificial. Three long pieces of rock set upright serve for basis to a great flat stone, which forms the table of the altar. There is commonly a pretty large cavity under this altar, which might be intended to receive the blood of the victims ; and they never fail to find stones for striking fire scattered round it ; for no other fire, but such as was struck forth with a flint, was pure enough for so holy a purpose. Sometimes these rural altars are constructed in a more magnificent manner ; a double range of enormous stones surround the altar and the little hill on which it is erected. In Zealand we see one of this kind ;

kind* ; which is formed of stones of a prodigious magnitude. Men would even now be afraid to undertake such a work, notwithstanding all the assistance of the mechanic powers which in those times they wanted. What redoubles the astonishment is, that stones of that size are rarely to be seen throughout the island, and that they must have been brought from a great distance. What labour and perseverance then must have been bestowed upon these vast rude monuments, which are unhappily more durable than those of the fine arts? But men in all ages have been persuaded, that they could not pay greater honour to the Deity, than by making for him (if I may so express it) a kind of strong bulwarks ; in executing prodigies of labour ; in consecrating to him immense riches. The sacrifice of whatever is vicious in our passions, which he only requires of us for our own happiness, is always the last thing that is thought of to offer to him, because it is perhaps what is after all the most difficult. At Ephesus they displayed their devotion, by laying out upon one single temple all the treasures of Greece and Asia. The Goths, whose bodily strength was all their riches, shewed their zeal by rolling enormous rocks to the summits of hills.

In some places of Norway, are found grottos, which have also been employed for religious uses. Some of them have been cut with incredible pains in
the

* Vide Olai Wormii Monum. Danic.

the hardest rocks ; others are formed of prodigious stones brought near and combined together with a force no less surprising *.

By degrees, as the Scandinavians formed new intercourses and connections with the other nations of Europe, whether by the expeditions they undertook, or by the foreign colonies which came to establish themselves among them, their religion, changing by degrees, tolerated insensibly temples and idols, and at length adopted them without reserve. The three principal nations of Scandinavia † vied with each other in erecting temples, but none were more famous than that of Upsal in Sweden. It glittered on all sides with gold. A chain of the same metal (or at least gilded) ran round the roof, although the circumference was not less than nine hundred ells. Hacon, earl of Norway, had built one near Drontheim, which was not inferior to that of Upsal. When Olaus, king of Norway, introduced the Christian faith into that country, he caused this temple to be razed to the ground, and broke to pieces the idols it contained : They found there great riches, and particularly a ring of gold of great value. Iceland had also its temples, and the chronicles of that country speak with admiration of two especially, one situate in the north of the island, the other in the south. In each of these temples, " there was," says an author of that country,

* Worm. Monum. Danic. lib. i. p. 6.

† Sweden, Denmark, and Norway.

try *, " a private chapel, which was regarded as a
 " holy place: There they placed the idols upon a
 " kind of altar, around which they ranged the vic-
 " tims that were to be offered up. Another altar
 " stood opposite to it, plated with iron, in order that
 " the fire which was to burn there perpetually,
 " should not damage it: Upon this altar was placed
 " a vase of brass, in which they received the blood
 " of the victims: Beside it stood a brush which they
 " made use of to sprinkle the blood upon the by-
 " standers. There hung up likewise a great silver
 " ring which they stained with blood, and which
 " whoever took an oath on any occasion was requir-
 " ed to hold in his hand. In one of these temples,
 " there was also near the chapel a deep pit or well,
 " into which they cast the victims."

When Denmark had embraced the Christian faith, they applied themselves with as much zeal to destroy these temples, as they had a little before to serve their false gods in them. In a short time they were all razed to the ground, and the very remembrance of the places where they stood was totally lost. But the altars that are very often found scattered upon the mountains and in the woods, testify at this day, that the ancient Danes were not less attached to this mode of worship † than the other northern nations.

All

* Vid. Arngrim. Jon. Crymo-
 gæa.

† Our author has here fallen
 into a small inadvertency; for
 surely

All the gods whose names I have enumerated, and many others of inferior note, were worshipped and invoked by the ancient Scandinavians, but not all in the same manner, nor on the same account. The great temple of Upsal seemed to be particularly consecrated to the three superior deities, and each of them was characterized by some particular symbol. ODIN was represented holding a sword in his hand: THOR stood at the left hand of Odin, with a crown upon his head, a sceptre in one hand, and a club in the other. Sometimes they painted him on a chariot, drawn by two he-goats of wood, with a silver bridle, and his head surrounded with stars. FRIGGA stood at the left hand of Thor; she was represented of both sexes (as an hermaphrodite) and with divers other attributes, which characterized the goddesses of pleasure. Odin was invoked as the god of battles and victory. Thor, as the governor of the seasons, who dispensed rains, dry weather and fertility. Frigga as the goddess of pleasures, of love and marriage. I do not here enter into a minute account of the worship rendered to the other gods: That which was paid to the three superior deities consisted principally in sacrifices, and deserves to be described more at large.

There were three great religious festivals in the year. The first was celebrated at the winter solstice.

They

surely the ancient worship in TEMPLES is not proved by the altars found scattered in the WOODS and MOUNTAINS.

They called the night on which it was observed, the MOTHER-NIGHT, as that which produced all the rest : and this epoch was rendered the more remarkable as they dated from thence the beginning of the year, which among the northern nations was computed from one winter solstice to another, as the month was from one new moon to the next. This feast which was very considerable, was named IVUL *, and was celebrated in honour of THOR, or the sun, in order to obtain a propitious year, and fruitful seasons. Sacrifices, feasting, dances, nocturnal assemblies, and all the demonstrations of a most dissolute joy, were then authorized by the general usage : These answered to the Saturnalia of the Romans, and were in a great measure renewed afterwards among the people, on occasion of the feast of Christmas. The second festival was instituted in honour of the earth, or of the goddess GOYA or FRIGGA, to request of her pleasures, fruitfulness, and victory : And it was fixed at the first quarter of the second moon of the year. The third, which seems to have been the most considerable in ancient times, was instituted in honour of ODIN ; it was celebrated at the beginning of the spring, in order to welcome in that pleasant season, and especially to obtain of the god of battles happy success in their projected expeditions. There were also some feasts in honour

* Hence is derived the word YEOL or YULE, [Ang. Sax. YEOL,] the old name for Christmas. Vide Glossary of the Scott. lang. 1802. T.

honour of the other gods, and they were often multiplied on occasion of particular events.

In the earliest ages, the offerings were simple, and such as shepherds and rustics could present. They loaded the altars of the gods with the first fruits of their crops, and the choicest products of the earth: Afterwards they sacrificed animals. They offered to Thor, during the feast of *IUVUL*, fat oxen and horses; to Frigga the largest hog they could get*; to Odin horses, dogs, and falcons, sometimes cocks, and a fat bull. When they had once laid it down as a principle that the effusion of the blood of these animals appeased the anger of the gods, and that their justice turned aside upon the victims those strokes which were destined for men; their great care then was for nothing more than to conciliate their favour by so easy a method. It is the nature of violent desires and excessive fear to know no bounds, and therefore when they would ask for any favour which they ardently wished for, or would deprecate some public calamity which they feared, the blood of animals was not deemed a price sufficient, but they began to shed that of men. It is probable that this barbarous practice was formerly almost universal, and that it is of a very remote antiquity: It was not entirely abolished among the northern nations till towards the ninth century, because before that time they had not received the

* *Matrem Deum venerantur Æstii: in signe superstitionis, formas aporum gerant.* Tacit. Germ. c. 45.

the light of the gospel, and were ignorant of those arts which had softened the ferocity of the Romans and Greeks whilst they were still pagans.

The appointed time for these sacrifices was always determined by another superstitious opinion which made the northern nations regard the number **THREE** as sacred and particularly dear to the gods. Thus in every ninth month they renewed this bloody ceremony, which was to last nine days, and every day they offered up nine living victims, whether men or animals. But the most solemn sacrifices were those which were offered at Upsal in Sweden every ninth year. Then the king, the senate, and all the citizens of any distinction, were obliged to appear in person; and to bring offerings, which were placed in the great temple described above. Those who could not come themselves, sent their presents by others, or paid the value in money to priests whose business it was to receive the offerings. Strangers flocked there in crowds from all parts; and none were excluded except those whose honour had suffered some stain, and especially such as had been accused of cowardice. Then they chose among the captives in time of war, and among the slaves in time of peace, nine persons to be sacrificed: The choice was partly regulated by the opinion of the by-standers, and partly by lot. The wretches upon whom the lot fell, were treated with such honours by all the assembly, they were so overwhelmed with caresses for the present, and with promises for

the life to come, that they sometimes congratulated themselves on their destiny. But they did not always sacrifice such mean persons ; In great calamities, in a pressing famine for example, if the people thought they had some pretext to impute the cause of it to their king, they even sacrificed him without hesitation, as the highest price with which they could purchase the divine favour. In this manner the first king * of VERMLAND was burnt in honour of Odin, to put an end to a great dearth ; as we read in the history of Norway. The kings, in their turn, did not spare the blood of their subjects ; and many of them even shed that of their children. Hacon, king of Norway, offered his son in sacrifice, to obtain of Odin the victory over his enemy Harald †. Aune, king of Sweden, devoted to Odin the blood of his nine sons, to prevail on that god to prolong his life ‡. The ancient history of the North abounds in similar examples. These abominable sacrifices were accompanied with various ceremonies. When the victim was chosen, they conducted him towards the altar where the sacred fire was kept burning night and day : It was surrounded with all sorts of iron and brazen vessels : Among them one was distinguished from the rest by its superior size ; in this they received the blood of the victims. When they offered up animals, they

speedily

* This was a petty king of a province of Sweden. See Wormius, in Monum. Dan. p. 25, 26.

† Saxo Grammat. lib. x.

‡ Worm. Monum. Danic. lib. i.

p. 28.

speedily killed them at the foot of the altar ; then they opened their entrails to draw auguries from them, as among the Romans ; afterwards they dressed the flesh to be served up in a feast prepared for the assembly. Even horse flesh was not rejected, and the grandees often eat of it as well as the people. But when they were disposed to sacrifice men, those whom they pitched upon were laid upon a great stone, where they were instantly either strangled or knocked on the head. Sometimes they let out the blood ; for no pre-sage was more respected than that which they drew from the greater or less degree of impetuosity with which the blood gushed forth. Hence the priests inferred what success would attend the enterprize which was the object of their sacrifice. They also opened the body to read in the entrails, and especially in the heart, the will of the gods, and the good or ill fortune that was impending. The bodies were afterwards burnt, or suspended in a sacred grove near the temple. Part of the blood was sprinkled upon the people, part of it upon the sacred grove ; with the same they also bedewed the images of the gods, the altars, the benches and walls of the temple, both within and without.

Sometimes these sacrifices were performed in another manner *. There was a deep well in the neighbourhood of the temple : The chosen person was thrown headlong in ; commonly in honour of Goya,
or

* See Arngnim, Jonas in Crymogæa. lib. 3.

or the EARTH. If he went at once to the bottom, the victim had proved agreeable to the goddess, and she had received it : If it swam a long time upon the surface, she refused it, and it was hung up in a sacred forest. Near the temple of Upsal, there was a grove of this sort, of which every tree and every leaf was regarded as the most sacred thing in the world. This, which was named ODIN'S GROVE, was full of the bodies of men and animals who had been sacrificed. They afterwards took them down to burn them in honour of Thor or the sun : And they had no doubt that the holocaust had proved agreeable, when the smoke ascended very high. In whatever manner they immolated men, the priest always took care in consecrating the victim to pronounce certain words, as, " I devote thee to Odin." " I send thee to Odin." Or, " I devote thee for a good harvest ; for the return of a fruitful season." The ceremony concluded with feasting, in which they displayed all the magnificence known in those times. They drank immoderately ; the kings and chief lords drank first, healths in honour of the gods : Every one drank afterwards, making some vow or prayer to the god whom they named. Hence came that custom among the first Christians in Germany and the North, of drinking to the health of our Saviour, the apostles, and the saints : A custom which the church was often obliged to tolerate. The licentiousness of these feasts at length increased to such a pitch, as to become mere bacchanalian meetings, where, to the sound of barbarous music,

music, amidst shouts, dancing and indecent gestures, so many unseemly actions were committed, that the wisest men refused to assist at them.

The same kinds of sacrifices were offered, though perhaps with less splendour, in Denmark, Norway, and Iceland. Let us hear on this subject an historian of the eleventh century, Dithmar bishop of Merseburg *. “ There is,” says he, “ in Zealand, a place “ which is the capital of Denmark, named Lederun, “ (this is now Lethra or Leyre, of which I shall speak “ hereafter). At this place, every nine years, in the “ month of January, the Danes flock together in “ crowds, and offer to their gods ninety-nine men, as “ many horses, dogs and cocks, with the certain hope “ of appeasing the gods by these victims.” Dudo of St. Quentin, a French historian, attributes the same practice to the Normans or Norwegians †: But he informs us, that it was in honour of Thor that these sacrifices were made. Arngrim Jonas, an Icelandic author, who hath writ with great learning upon the antiquities of his nation ‡, remarks, that there were formerly in Iceland, two temples in which they offered up human victims, and a famous pit or well in which they were thrown headlong. There are still in Friezland, and in several places of Germany, altars composed of such large stones that they could neither be destroyed by the ravages of time, nor by the

* Dithm. Merseburg. Chronic.
lib. i. p. 12.

† Dudo Quint. sub init.

‡ J. Arngr. Crymog. lib. i. c. 7.

the zeal of the first converts to Christianity. These altars, according to the tradition of the inhabitants, and the reports of creditable historians, have served for the same horrid purposes*. The Gauls for a long time offered men to their supreme god Esus, or TEUTAT†. The first inhabitants of Italy, and Sicily, the Britons, the Phenicians, the Carthaginians, and all the nations we know of in Europe and Asia, have been covered with the same reproach. And can we wonder at it? Every nation buried in ignorance must inevitably fall into error, and from thence into fanaticism and cruelty. Men are born surrounded with dangers and evils, at the same time that they are weak and naked. If, as they grow up to manhood, the arts of civil life, and the security of laws do not disperse their fears, soften their dispositions, and diffuse through their minds, calmness, moderation, and the social affections, they become a prey to a thousand gloomy terrors, which paint out all nature to them as full of dangers and enemies, and keep them perpetually armed with ferocity and distrust. Hence that thirst of revenge and destruction which barbarous nations cannot lay aside: Hence that impious prejudice which makes them imagine the gods to be as sanguinary as themselves. It is the unhappiness of our nature, that ignorance suggests fear, and fear cruelty. They must therefore be very little acquainted with
human

* Ubbó Emmius Hist. Fris. lib.
3 p. 21.

† This our author thinks was
the same as Odin. T.

human nature, and still less so with history, who place the golden age of any people in the age of its poverty and ignorance. It is so true that men are every where alike in this respect, that nations who have never had any commerce with those of Europe, have run into the same excesses with equal fury. The Peruvians anciently offered human sacrifices. The Mexicans once offered up to their gods, upon one single occasion, five thousand prisoners of war. Multitudes of people, half-unknown and wandering in the deserts of Africa, or forests of America, do to this day destroy each other, from the same principles and with the same blind fury.

The priests of these inhuman Gods were called *DROTRES*, a name which probably answers to the Gallic word *DRUIDS*: They were also frequently styled Prophets, Wise Men, Divine Men. At Upsal each of the three superior deities had their respective priests, the principal of whom to the number of twelve, presided over the sacrifices, and exercised an unlimited authority over every thing which seemed to have connection with religion. The respect shown them was suitable to this authority. Sprung for the most part from the same family *, like those of the Jews, they persuaded the people that this family had
 God

* Among the northern nations, says Diodorus Siculus, a family is charged (from father to son) with the care of the temples, and the worship of the gods. Hist. lib. ii. c. 47.

God himself for its founder *. They often united the priesthood and the sovereignty in their own persons, after the example of Odin their legislator. And it was in consequence of that custom that in later times kings still performed some functions of the priesthood, or set apart their children for an office so highly revered. The goddess Frigga was usually served by kings daughters, whom they called PROPHETESSES and GODDESSES ; these pronounced oracles, devoted themselves to perpetual virginity, and kept up the sacred fire in her temple. Tacitus informs us, that among the Germans, the power of inflicting pains and penalties, of striking, and binding a criminal, was vested in the priests alone. And these men so haughty, who thought themselves dishonoured if they did not revenge the slightest offence, would trembling submit to blows, and even death itself from the hand of the pontiff, whom they took for the instrument of an angry deity †. In short, the credulity of the people, and the craft and presumption of the priest went so far, that these pretended interpreters of the Divine Will dared even to demand, in the name of heaven, the blood of kings themselves ; and they obtained it. To succeed in this, it was only requisite for them to avail themselves

* Hence the appellation DRUIDS appears to be rather of Scandinavian or Teutonic than of Armoric or Welch origin ; from *Drotten*, dominus ; fidelis, &c. E.

* *Neque animadvertere, neque vincire, neque verberare nisi sacerdotibus permissum, non ducis jussu, sed velut Deo imperante.* Tacit. Germ.

selves of those times of calamity, when the people, distracted with sorrow and fear, lay their minds open to the most horrid impressions. At those times, while the prince was slaughtered at one of the altars of the gods; the others were covered with offerings, which were heaped up on all sides for their ministers.

I have already observed, that the ancient religion of the northern nations * made the deity to interpose in the most indifferent events, as well as the most considerable; and they only considered the elements as so many organs by which he manifested his will and his resolves. This opinion once admitted, interest or superstition quickly drew from thence a consequence natural enough: namely, that by studying with care the phenomena of nature, or, to speak in the spirit of that religion, the visible actions of that unseen deity, men might come to know his will, inclinations, and desires: in one word, they entered into a kind of commerce with him; oracles, auguries, divinations, and a thousand practices of that kind quickly sprung up in crowds, from this erroneous principle. Accordingly, in all our ancient fables and chronicles, we see the northern nations extremely attached to this vain science. They had oracles like the people of Italy and Greece, and these oracles were not less revered, nor less famous than theirs. It was generally believed either that the gods and goddesses, or, more commonly, that the three destinies whose names I have

Vol. I.

Q

given

* Celtic nations. Orig.

given elsewhere, delivered out these oracles in their temples. That of Upfal was as famous for its oracles as its sacrifices. There were also celebrated ones in Dalia, a province of Sweden ; in Norway and Denmark. "It was," says Saxo, the Grammarian, "a custom with the ancient Danes to consult the oracles of the Parcæ, concerning the future destiny of children newly born. Accordingly, Fridleif being desirous to know that of his son Olaus, entered into the temple of the gods to pray ; and being introduced into the sanctuary, he saw three goddeffes upon so many seats. The first, who was of a beneficent nature, granted the infant beauty, and the gift of pleasing. The second gave him a noble heart. But the third, who was envious and spiteful, to spoil the work of her sisters, imprinted on him the stain of covetousness." It should seem that the idols or statues themselves of the gods and goddeffes delivered these oracles *vivâ voce*. In an ancient Icelandic chronicle, we read of one Indrid, who went from home to wait for Thorstein his enemy. "Thorstein," says the author, "upon his arrival, entered into the temple. In it was a stone (cut probably into a statue) which he had been accustomed to worship ; he prostrated himself before it, and prayed to it (to inform him of his destiny). Indrid, who stood without, heard the stone chaunt forth these verses. "It is for the last time, it is with feet drawing near to the grave, that thou art come to this place : For it is most certain, that be-

fore-

“ fore the sun ariseth, the valiant Indrid shall make thee feel his hatred*.” The people persuaded themselves sometimes that these idols answered by a gesture or a nod of the head, which signified that they hearkened to the prayers of their supplicants. Thus in the history of Olave Tryggesson, king of Norway, we see a lord named Hacon, who enters into a temple, and prostrates himself before an idol which held in its hand a great bracelet of gold. Hacon, adds the historian, easily conceiving, that so long as the idol would not part with the bracelet, it was not disposed to be reconciled to him, and having made some fruitless efforts to take the bracelet away, began to pray afresh, and to offer it presents : then getting up a second time, the idol loosed the bracelet, and he went away very well pleased. I shall not lose time in entering into a description of the other kinds of Oracles. Enough has been said to convince the discerning reader, that here was the same credulity on the one side, and the same imposture on the other, as had formerly procured credit to the oracles of Greece and Asia. There is no essential difference between those of the two countries, though so far distant from each other. If the luxury of the southern nations set theirs off with more pomp and magnificence than comported with the simplicity of the rude inhabitants of the North, the latter had no less veneration and attachment to their own oracles, than they. It has been thought to be

* Holmveria saga apud Bartholin, lib. iii. c. 12.

be no less for the interest of religion to attribute these of the North to the artifices of the devil, than the others, as well as the pretended science of magic, of which the North has past so long for the most celebrated school and peculiar country. It is true that men have not advanced on the subject of the northern oracles, as they have done with respect to those of the south, that they ceased at the birth of Christ *, although the assertion is as true of the one as of the other: But for want of this proof, an ill-grounded zeal hath found plenty of others; as if the advantages resulting from true religion were less important, or our gratitude less due, because the evils from which it hath delivered mankind, did not proceed from supernatural causes.

Oracles were not the only efforts made by the curiosity of the Scandinavians to penetrate into futurity, nor the only relief imposture afforded them. They had diviners both male and female, honoured with the name of prophets, and revered as if they had been such. Some of them were said to have familiar spirits, who never left them, and whom they consulted under the form of little idols: Others dragged the ghosts of the departed from their tombs, and forced the

* Pope Gregory writing to the Saxons newly converted, says, *Falsidica numina in quibus demones habitare noscuntur--Oro ut sint a diabolica fraude liberati, &c. &c.* Ex Epist. Bonifac. a Serar. Mogunt. in 4 edit.—Nothing was more common at that time than this sort of language.

the dead to tell them what would happen. Of this last sort was Odin himself, who often called up the souls of the deceased, to know what passed in distant countries. There is still extant a very ancient Icelandic ode upon a subject of this kind * ; wherein the poet represents, in very strong imagery, Odin as descending to the infernal regions, and calling up from thence a celebrated prophetess. Poetry was often employed for the like absurd purposes, and those same SCALDS or bards, who as we shall see hereafter, enjoyed such credit among the living, boasted a power of disturbing the repose of the dead, and of dragging them spite of their teeth out of their gloomy abodes, by force of certain songs which they knew how to compose. The same ignorance, which made poetry be regarded as something supernatural, persuaded them also that the letters or RUNIC characters, which were then used by the few who were able to write and read, included in them certain mysterious and magical properties. Impostors then easily persuaded a credulous people, that these letters, disposed and combined after a certain manner, were able to work wonders, and in particular to presage future events. It is said, that Odin, who was the inventor of those characters, knew by their means how to raise the dead. There were letters, or RUNES, to procure victory, to preserve from poison, to relieve women in labour, to cure bodily diseases, to dispel evil thoughts from the mind,

* This the reader will find translated in the second part of this work.

mind, to dissipate melancholy, and to soften the severity of a cruel mistress. They employed pretty nearly the same characters for all these different purposes, but they varied the order and combination of the letters: They wrote them either from right to left, or from top to bottom, or in form of a circle, or contrary to the course of the sun, &c. In this principally consisted that puerile and ridiculous art, as little understood probably by those who professed it, as it was distrusted by those who had recourse to it.

I have already remarked, that they had often no other end in sacrificing human victims, than to know what was to happen by inspection of their entrails, by the effusion of their blood, and by the greater or less degree of celerity with which they sunk to the bottom of the water. The same motive engaged them to lend an attentive ear to the singing of birds, which some diviners boasted a power of interpreting. The ancient history of Scandinavia is as full of these superstitious practices, as that of Rome itself. We see in Saxo Grammaticus, as in Livy, auguries which forebode the success of an expedition, warriors who are struck by unexpected presages, lots consulted, days regarded as favourable or unlucky, female diviners who follow the armies, showers of blood, forebodings, wonderful dreams which the event never fails to justify, and the slightest circumstances of the most important actions taken for good or bad omens. This hath been, we well know, a general and inveterate disease in human nature, of which it hath only begun
to

to be cured in Europe. To recall to view a spectacle, which tends so much to mortify and humble us, would be a labour as useless as discouraging to an historian, if the knowledge of all these practices did not make an essential part of that of Manners, and of the causes of events, without which there could be no history ; and also if the sketch of the errors and mistakes of human reason did not convincingly prove to us the necessity of cultivating it. A person endued with natural good sense, will also find by this means remedies proper to cure whatever remains of such weakness and credulity hang about him. It is true, one cannot always refute the marvellous and supernatural stories of ancient historians, by the bare circumstances of their relations ; because, besides that it would be endless to enter continually upon such discussions, we often want the pieces necessary to enable us to make all the researches such an examination would require. But what needs there more to convince us that we have a right to reject, without exception, all facts of this kind, than to consider, on the one hand, how ignorant the vulgar are even in our days, how credulous, how easy to be imposed on, and to be even the dupes of their own fancy, greedy of the marvellous, inclined to exaggeration, and precipitant in their judgments : And, on the other hand, that among those nations whose history appears so astonishing at present, for a long time all were vulgar, except perhaps a few obscure sages, whose voice was too feeble to be heard amid the clamours of so many blind and prejudiced persons ?

persons? Is it not sufficient to consider further, that the age of the greatest ignorance of such nations is precisely that which hath been most fruitful of oracles, divinations, prophetic dreams, apparitions, and other prodigies of that kind? that they appear more seldom in proportion as they are less believed? and finally, that the experience of our own times shows us, that wherever reason is brought to the greatest perfection, all things fall into the order of natural and simple events, insomuch that the lowest and meanest class of men accustom themselves to believe nothing which is not agreeable to good sense, and accompanied with some probability?

But I repeat it once more, that superstition did not blind all the ancient Scandinavians without exception: And history testifies, that there were, after all, among them men wise enough to discover the folly of the received opinions, and courageous enough to condemn them without reserve. In the history of Olave* king of Norway, a warrior fears not to say publicly, that he relies much more on his own strength, and on his arms, than upon Thor or Odin. Another, in the same book, speaks thus to his friend. " I would have
 " thee know, that I believe neither in idols nor spi-
 " rits. I have travelled in many places; I have met
 " with giants and monstrous men: they could never
 " overcome me; thus to this present hour my own
 " force

* Or Olaus surnamed Tryggveson. Vid. Bartholin. de Causis, &c. p. 80.

“ force and courage are the sole objects of my belief.” Unluckily there seems too much room to suspect that this contempt of superstition did but throw them for the most part into the opposite extreme. So true is it, that we seldom are able to observe a just medium. At least, many of the northern warriors seem to have been so intoxicated with their courage, as to esteem themselves independent beings, who had nothing to ask or fear from the gods. In an Icelandic chronicle, a vain-glorious person makes his boast to a Christian missionary, that he had never yet acknowledged any religion, and that his own strength and abilities were every thing to him. For the same reason, others refused to sacrifice to the gods of whom they had no need. St. Olave king of Norway, demanding of a warrior, who offered him his services, what religion he professed; the warrior answered, “ I am neither Christian nor Pagan; my companions “ and I have no other religion, than the confidence in “ our own strength, and in the good success which “ always attends us in war; and we are of opinion, “ it is all that is necessary.” The same thing is related of ROLF surnamed KRACK, king of Denmark; one day when one of his companions proposed to offer a sacrifice to Odin, he said that he feared nothing from that blustering spirit, and that he should never stand in awe of him. But as it was not always kings who durst manifest sentiments so bold and hardy, the followers of the prevailing religion sometimes punished these irreligious persons. In the life of king Olave

Tryggeson, mention is made of a man who was condemned to exile for having sung in a public place, verses, the sense of which was to this purpose. " I will not insult or affront the gods : Nevertheless, the goddess Freya inspires me with no respect : It must certainly be that either she or Odin are chimerical deities." It is easy to conceive how much, natural good sense, supported by that confidence which bodily strength inspires, could excite in those ancient warriors contempt for their mute and feeble deities, and for the childish or troublesome rites in their worship. But besides this, it is certain, as I have already observed, that the Scythian religion, in its original purity, admitted only a simple and reasonable worship, and one sole, principal Deity, who was invisible and almighty. One may then suppose, with a good deal of likelihood, that this religion was not by length of time so much defaced, but that some traces of it still remained in the memory of sensible persons, and in the soundest part of the nation. Indeed we see appear at intervals, in the ancient Scandinavia, some men of this stamp endued with a real strength of mind, who not only trampled under foot all the objects of the credulity and idle superstition of the multitude, (an effort which pride renders easy, and sometimes alone produces) but who even raised their minds to the invisible master of every thing we see ; " the father of the sun, and of all nature." In an Icelandic chronicle, a person named GíEST says to his nephew, who is just ready to embark for Greenland :

land* : " I beseech, and conjure him who made the sun, to give success to thy undertaking." A celebrated Norwegian warrior, named THORSTEIN, says, speaking of his father, " He will receive upon this account a recompence from him, who made the heaven and the universe, whoever he be : " And, upon another occasion, he makes a vow to the same being, " who made the sun," for, adds he, " his power must needs have been excessive to produce such a work." All his family entertained the same sentiments, and it is expressly noted in many places of the same chronicle, that it was their religion to believe in him " who was creator of the sun." TORCHILL, a supreme judge of Iceland, a man of unblemished life, and distinguished among the wisest magistrates of that island during the time that it was governed in form of a republic, seeing his end draw near, ordered himself to be set in the open air, with his face turned towards the sun, and having rested there some moments in a kind of extacy, expired, recommending his soul to HIM among the gods, who had created the sun and the stars†. But of all the strokes of this kind, none is more remarkable than what a modern Icelandic historian relates in his manuscript supplement to the history of Norway. Harold Harfagre, the first king of all Norway, says this author, being yet but young, held the following discourse

* Vandæla. apud Barthol. c. 6. lib. i. p. 83.

† Arn. Jon. Crymog. lib. i. c. 6.

course in a popular assembly: "I swear and protest
" in the most sacred manner, that I will never offer
" sacrifice to any of the gods adored by the people,
" but to him only who hath formed this world, and
" every thing we behold in it." Harold lived in the
middle of the ninth century, at a time when the
Christian religion had not yet penetrated into Nor-
way.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VIII.

*Of the form of government which formerly prevailed
in the North.*

THE character of the ancient northern nations is, in some measure, laid open in the former book. It is the nature of every religion which is the handiwork of men, always to carry marks of the weakness of its authors, and to breathe forth the same spirit, with which they themselves were animated. Their government and laws are another faithful mirror, wherein that spirit may be seen with no less advantage. It is obvious, that the laws cannot long be contrary to the genius of a nation. Sooner or later they will be impressed with its character, or they will give it theirs. These are two streams very different in
their

their sources, but which as soon as they unite in the same channel, have but one force and one direction. The importance of this subject makes it incumbent on me to treat it with some extent, and to bring together with the utmost care all the feeble and scattered rays, which throw any light upon it amid the obscurity of so many dark ages.

In the first place, let us consult Tacitus, that excellent historian of ancient Germany, who in his little compendious narrative, hath given in a few pages a most striking picture of the inhabitants of this vast country. It is needless to repeat here what is known to all who have read his treatise concerning Germany, that he comprehended under this name all Scandinavia; and whatever he says of the former, equally regards the latter. His words ought to be given here entire, and weighed with care. Among this people, he says, "the chiefs, or princes*, determine some affairs of less importance; all the rest are reserved for the general assembly: Yet even these the decision of which is vested in the people, are beforehand discussed by the chiefs. At these assemblies they take their seats all of them armed. Silence is commanded by the priests, whose business it is at such times to maintain order. Then the king or chief speaks first; afterwards the great men are heard in their turns with that attention which

* *De minoribus rebus PRINCIPES consultant; de majoribus OMNES.*
Tacit. Germ. c. 11, 12, 13, 14, &c.

“ which is due to their age, to their nobility, their
 “ reputation in war, their eloquence; greater defer-
 “ ence being paid to their power of persuasion, than
 “ to their personal authority. If their advice dis-
 “ pleases, the people reject it with a general mur-
 “ mur: If it is approved of, they clash their lances*.
 “ It is the most honourable way of expressing their
 “ assent, or of conferring praise, to do it by their
 “ arms. . . . Criminal causes may also be brought
 “ before this great council of the nation. . . .
 “ In the same assemblies are elected the chiefs or
 “ princes, whose business it is to distribute justice
 “ through the towns and villages. To each of these
 “ are joined a hundred assessors chosen out of the
 “ people, who assist the chief with their advice and
 “ authority. . . . The kings are chosen
 “ for their noble birth; the leaders or generals for
 “ their personal valour†. The power of the kings is
 “ not arbitrary, but limited. The leaders are not so
 “ much to give orders as examples: They must fig-
 “ nalize themselves by their courage and activity,
 “ and their authority must be founded on esteem and
 “ admiration. . . . Extreme youth does not
 “ exclude from the rank of prince or chief, those,
 “ whom their noble birth, or the distinguished merit
 “ of their fathers intitle to this dignity. As they ad-
 “ vance in age, and acquire esteem, other young war-
 “ riors

* *Frameas concutiunt.* Tacit.

† *Reges ex nobilitate; Duces ex virtute sumunt.* Tacit. c. 7.

" riors attach themselves to them and swell their re-
 " tinue, Nor does any one blush to be seen among
 " these ATTENDANTS or FOLLOWERS *. Yet they
 " have different degrees of rank, which are regulated
 " by the chief's own judgment. Among the follow-
 " ers is great emulation, who shall stand highest in
 " the chief's or prince's favour : Among the princes,
 " who shall have the most numerous and valiant at-
 " tendants. This is their dignity, their strength, to
 " be always surrounded with a body of chosen
 " youths : This is their glory in peace ; their securi-
 " ty in war. And not only in their own nation, but
 " among neighbouring states, they acquire a name
 " and reputation, in proportion to the number and
 " valour of their attendants. Then is their friend-
 " ship sought after by embassies, and cultivated by
 " presents. . . . In battle, it would be a dis-
 " grace to the chief to be excelled in courage by any
 " of his followers : A disgrace to his followers not
 " to equal their chief. Should he perish, they would
 " be exposed to the highest infamy through life if
 " they should survive him, and escape from battle.
 " . . . The chiefs fight for victory : They for
 " their chief. . . . To retain their followers
 " in their service, no prince or chief hath any other
 " resource but war. They require of him one while
 " a horse trained for war : One while a victorious
 " and bloody lance. His table rudely served, but
 " with

* *Nec rubor inter COMITES aspicit. Tac.*

“ with great abundance, serves them instead of
“ pay.”

All the most distinguished circumstances which characterize the ancient Gothic form of government, are contained in this remarkable passage. Here we see Kings, who owe their advancement to an illustrious extraction, presiding, rather than ruling, over a free people. Here we see the Nation assembling at certain stated times, and making resolutions in their own persons on all affairs of importance, as to enact laws, to chuse peace or war, to conclude alliances, to distribute justice in the last resort, and to elect magistrates. Here also we distinguish a body of the *Grandeos* or *Chiefs* of the nation, who prepare and propose the important matters, the decision of which is reserved for the general assembly of all the free men: That is, we trace here the first lineaments, if I may so say, of what was afterwards named in different countries, “ The council of the nation,” “ The senate,” “ The house of peers,” &c. Here we discover the origin of that singular custom, of having an elective General under an hereditary King; a custom received among most of the nations of German extraction, who had either *Mayors of the Palace*, or *Grand Marshals*, or *Constables*, or *Counts*: For all these different names only expressed the same thing in different countries. Lastly, if we examine with attention the words of Tacitus, we cannot doubt but *Vassalage* and the *Feudal Tenure* had already taken footing among this people before ever they left their native forests. For, al.

though perhaps they did not in those early times give lands in fee, and although their Fees or Fiefs were then perhaps nothing but arms, war-horses, and banquets; what we read of the reciprocal engagements between the Princes or Chiefs and their Followers, evidently contains whatever was essential to the nature of Vassalage, and all the changes which were afterwards made in it were only slight and accidental, occasioned by the conquests and new establishments, which followed from it.

If we consider after this, the character of these nations, as it is sketched out by Tacitus, we shall not be surprized to see them wedded to institutions which they found so suitable to their situation and temper: For being the most free and warlike people upon earth, they must have had a natural aversion to the authority of a single person; and if they placed themselves under leaders, it was only because war cannot be conducted in any other form. As free men, they would only obey from choice, and be less influenced by personal authority than by reason: As warriors, they conceived no other duty to be owing to a prince, than to be ready to shed their blood for his cause.

But how came these men to preserve themselves in so great a degree of liberty? This was owing to their climate and manner of life, which gave them such strength of body and mind as rendered them capable of long and painful labours, of great and daring exploits. "Accordingly we have since found liberty to
 "prevail

“ prevail in North America : But not in the South *.”

For the bodily strength of the northern warriors kept up in them that courage, that opinion of their own valour, that impatience of affronts and injuries, which makes men hate all arbitrary government, and despise those who submit to it. Being less sensible of pain than the more southern nations, less easily moved by the bait of pleasure, less susceptible of those passions which shake the soul too violently, and weaken it by making it dependent on another's will, they were the less a prey to ambition, which flatters and intimidates by turns, in order to gain the ascendant : Their imagination more constant than lively, their conception more steady than quick, naturally resisting novelties, kept them from falling into those snares, out of which they would not have known how to escape.

They were free, because they inhabited an uncultivated country, rude forests and mountains ; and liberty is the sole treasure of an indigent people : for a poor country excites no avidity, and he who possesses little, defends it easily. They were free, because they were ignorant of those pleasures, often so dearly bought, which render the protection of a powerful master necessary. They were free, because hunters and shepherds, who wander about in woods through inclination or necessity, are not so easily oppressed as the timorous inhabitants of enclosed towns, who are there chained down to the fate of their houses : and
because

* Montesquieu. L'Esprit des Loix. Tom. 2.

because a wandering people, if deprived of their liberty in one place, easily find it in another, as well as their subsistence. Lastly, they were free, because knowing not the use of money, there could not be employed against them that instrument of slavery and corruption, which enables the ambitious to collect and distribute at will the signs of riches.

Further, that spirit of liberty, arising from their climate, and from their rustic and military life, had received new strength from the opinions it had produced; as a sucker which shoots forth from the root of a tree, strengthens by embracing it. In effect, these people, esteeming beyond all things, the right of revenging an affront, the glory of despising death and perishing sword in hand, were always ready to attack tyranny in the first who dared to attempt it, and in whatever formidable shape it appeared.

By these means was liberty preserved among the inhabitants of Germany and the North, as it were in the bud, ready to blossom and expand through all Europe, there to flourish in their several colonies. This powerful principle exerted the more strength in proportion as it was the more pressed, and the whole power of Rome having been unable to destroy it, it made that yield in its turn from the time it began to be enfeebled, till it was entirely overturned. Indeed, there was scarce a moment wherein these two opposite powers preserved an even balance. As soon as ever that of Rome ceased to be superior, it was destroyed. Its celebrated name, that name which had
been

been so long its support, was only a signal of vengeance, which served as it were to rally and assemble at the same instant all the northern nations : And immediately all these people breaking forth as it were by agreement, overturned this unhappy empire, and formed out of its ruins limited monarchies ; states not less known before by name, than by their form of government.

In effect, we every where see in those swarms of Germans and Scandinavians, troops of savage warriors who seem only born for ravage and destruction, changed into a sensible and free people as soon as ever they had confirmed their conquests ; impregnating (if I may so say) their institutions with a spirit of order and equality ; electing for their kings such of their princes of the blood royal as they judged most worthy to wear the crown ; dividing between those kings and the whole nation the exercise of the sovereign power ; reserving to the general assemblies the right of making laws, and deciding important matters ; and lastly, to give a solid support to the powers immediately essential to monarchy, distributing fiefs to the principal warriors, and assigning certain privileges proper to the several orders of the state.

Such for a long time was the constitution of all the governments which these people founded in Italy, in Spain, in Gaul, in Britain at that memorable æra, which changed the fate and place of abode of so many nations : An æra for ever memorable, since here we trace the first link (as it were) of a new chain of events ;

events; and hence we see spring forth the laws, the manners and principles which have ever since governed so many celebrated nations, whose superiority of genius seems to have called them forth to determine one day the fate of almost all the rest of the world.

One cannot without difficulty quit an object so pleasing. It is time, however, to confine myself to what more particularly relates to my subject. All that we learn from the historical monuments of the North perfectly confirms the testimony of Tacitus, and either gives or receives new light from the annals of the other Teutonic nations. This remarkable agreement made M. de Montesquieu say that "in reading Tacitus we every where see the codes of the barbarous nations: And in reading the codes of the barbarous nations, we are continually reminded of Tacitus." Notwithstanding this, we must not flatter ourselves that we can discover exactly the extent of power, which the ancient kings of Scandinavia enjoyed, nor the particular rights and privileges of each order of the state. If these were never very precisely determined among a rude people, who had no other laws but custom, how can we distinguish them exactly at the present great distance of time? All that we can obscurely discover, is, that the Danes, who before the arrival of Odin, were divided into many nations, and lived in great independence, were by force of arms subjected to kings more absolute, whom this conqueror placed over them. It is still more probable, that the same thing happened to the Swedes, who,

who, according to Tacitus, were in his time under the government of a single person. If this historian is well informed, the point of time in which he has described the Swedes, must have been that immediately after their conquest. This event alone will account for that state of despotism in which he supposes them to be sunk. "The Swedes*," he tells us, "honour riches as well as the Romans. And for this reason they have fallen under the dominion of a single person. Their monarchy is no longer moderated and limited by any restrictions; but is entirely despotic. The arms are not there as among the other Germanic people, promiscuously found in every one's hand, but they are kept shut up under a close guard; and are even under the custody of a slave." This government so "entirely despotic" was doubtless owing to some accident: accordingly it could not be of long duration. An arbitrary government hath since been re-established in Sweden upon several occasions, but never for any long continuance. This climate, made for liberty, always triumphs in the end over despotic sway, which in other countries hath always triumphed over liberty.

The Danes were not long before they recovered their right of electing their kings, and consequently all the other rights less essential to liberty. It is true, the people seem always to have made it a law to chuse the

* *Lat. Suiones; Tacit. Germ. c. 44.*

the nearest relation of the deceased king, or at least some one of the royal family, which they respected as issued from the gods. They still shew the places where these elections were made: And as Denmark was for a long time divided into three kingdoms, we find accordingly three principal monuments of this custom; the one near Lunden in Scania; the other at Leyra, or Lethra, in Zealand; and the third near Viburg in Jutland. These monuments, whose rude bulk has preserved them from the ravages of time, are only vast unhewn stones, commonly twelve in number, set upright and placed in form of a circle. In the middle is erected a stone much larger than the rest, on which they made a seat for their king *. The other stones served as a barrier to keep off the populace, and marked the place of those whom the people had appointed to make the election. They treated also in the same place of the most important affairs. But if the king chanced to die in war, or at a distance from home, they formed upon the spot a place after the same model, by bringing together the largest stones they could find. The principal chiefs got upon these stones, and with a loud voice delivered their opinions; then the soldiers who stood in crowds about them signified their approbation or assent by clashing their shields together in a kind of cadence, or by raising certain shouts. We know that this custom of electing their kings in the open field prevailed among all

* Worm Monum. Danic.

all the northern nations, and was for a long time necessary, because they had no cities. The emperors of Germany were for many ages elected after the same manner; and the Poles, more attached to their ancient customs than other nations, have not to this day forsaken it.

In Sweden, they joined to the other ceremonies which I have been describing, an oath, reciprocally taken between the king and his subjects*. One of the senators, or judges of the provinces, convoked an assembly to make a new election immediately after the death of the king, and demanded with a loud voice of the people, if they would accept for king the person he named, who was always one of the royal family. When they had all given their consent, the new king was lifted up on the shoulders of the senators †, in order that all the people might see and know him. Then he took Odin to witness, that he would observe the laws, defend his country, extend its boundaries, revenge whatever injuries his predecessors had received from their enemies, and would strike some signal stroke which should render him and his people famous. This oath he renewed at the funeral of his predecessor, which was usually celebrated with great

VOL. I.

T

pomp :

* Dalin. Suea Rikes. Hist. tom. 1. chap. 7.

† We preserve in England to this day a relique of this custom, by carrying our members of par-

liament, as soon as they are elected, in chairs upon the shoulders of the burgeses, and so exposing them to general view. T.

pomp: And also on occasion of the progress which he was obliged to make through the chief provinces of the kingdom, in order to receive the homage of his subjects. I relate here all the particulars of this ceremony, because the exact conformity which we find between the manners of the Danes and Swedes during the ages of paganism, will not suffer us to doubt but that the kings of Denmark were elected after the same manner. This supposition is confirmed by what we can discover of the ancient constitution of the kingdom of Norway. But it is sufficient just to mention here this identity of government in the three principal kingdoms of the North. To describe it minutely in them all, would occasion tiresome repetitions. We have a remarkable fact, relative to this matter, which it will be of much greater consequence to know, as well on account of the great light which it throws on this subject, as on account of its own striking singularity.

A colony of Norwegians driven from their own country by the tyranny of one of their kings, established itself in Iceland towards the end of the ninth century *. History informs us, that immediately, without losing time, they proceeded to elect magistrates, to enact laws, and, in a word, to give their government such a regular form, as might at once insure their tranquillity and independence. The situation in which these Icelanders found themselves is remarkable

* See a more particular relation of this below, in Chap. XI.

remarkable on many accounts. The genius of this people, their natural good sense, and their love of liberty appeared upon this occasion in all their vigour. Uninterrupted and unrestrained by any outward force, we have here a nation delivered up to its own direction, and establishing itself in a country separated by vast seas from all the rest of the world: We see, therefore, in all their institutions, nothing but the pure dictates of their own inclinations and sentiments, and these were so natural, and so suited to their situation and character, that we do not find any general deliberation, any irresolution, any trial of different modes of government ever preceded that form of civil polity which they at first adopted, and under which they lived afterwards so many ages. The whole settled into form as it were of itself, and fell into order without any effort. In like manner, as bees form their hives, the new Icelanders, guided by a happy instinct, immediately on their landing in a desert island, established that fine constitution wherein liberty is fixed on its proper basis, viz. a wise distribution of the different powers of government. An admirable discovery, which at first sight, one would think must have been the master-piece of some consummate politician; and which, nevertheless, according to the remark of a great genius of this age *, was completed

* M. de MONTESQUIEU.— the testimony of many ancient annals, both printed and manuscript, of

ed here, as in other countries, by savages in the midst of forests.

Nature having of itself divided the island into four provinces, the Icelanders followed this division, and established in each of them a magistrate who might be called the Provincial Judge. Each province was subdivided into three Prefectures *, which had their respective Judges or Prefects. And lastly, each Prefecture contained a certain number of Bailiwicks; in each of which were commonly five inferior magistrates, whose business it was to distribute justice in the first instance through their own district; to see that good order was preserved in it †; and to convoke the assemblies of the Bailiwick, as well ordinary as extraordinary, of which all free men, who possessed lands of a certain value, were members. In these assemblies they elected the five Judges or Bailifs, who were to be persons distinguished for their wisdom;

of the Icelanders themselves: Of which we find various notices and extracts in a multitude of books, particularly in that of Torfæus cited above, and in Arngrim's work intitled Crymogæa.

* Only the northern province or quarter, being larger than the rest, contained four of these Prefectures.

† It was the business of these magistrates to punish the dissolute, particularly such as were poor

through their own fault. We find in the Icelandic code this remarkable law which Arngrim thus renders into Latin. *Ejusmodi mendici impune CASTRANDI etiam si cum eorundum nece conjunctum foret.* Tit. de Pupil. c. 33. There is in the same code another Law which forbids the giving sustenance or relief of any kind to common beggars. Tit. de Mendic. c. 39 & 36. *First Edit.*

dom; and were required to enjoy a certain income in lands, for fear their poverty should expose them to contempt or corruption. When the causes were of any importance, the whole assembly gave their opinion. Without its full consent, a new member could not be received into their community. If any such offered himself, he applied to the assembly, who examined his motives for making the request, and rejected it, if the petitioner had failed in honour on any occasion, or was merely too poor: For, as the community maintained such of its own members as were by any accident reduced to misery or want*, it was their common interest to exclude such persons as were indigent: They had for that purpose a fund supported by contribution, as also by what arose from the fines, which were the more considerable, as they used in those times scarce any other kind of punishment†.

Lastly,

* Thus the Assembly rebuilt (at least in part) any man's house that was burnt down, bestowed a new stock of cattle on such as had lost their own by any contagious distemper, &c. In these cases the Bailiffs taxed each citizen according to his substance. *First Edit.*

† It is a remark of the author of the *Spirit of Laws*, a remark confirmed by the History of all nations, that in proportion as any people love liberty, the milder are

their punishments. The ancient Germans and Scandinavians, the most brave and free race of men that perhaps ever existed, knew scarcely any other than pecuniary penalties. They carried this spirit with them through all parts of Europe, as appears from the Codes of the Visigoths, the Burgundians, &c. But the governments which they established in the more southern countries could not subsist with so much lenity.

In

Lastly, this same assembly of the Bailiwick took care to examine into the conduct of the Bailiffs received the complaints that were made against them, and punished them when convicted of abusing their authority.

A re-assembly of the members, or at least of the deputies of ten such communities, represented, what I call a Prefecture. Each quarter or grand province of the island contained three of these, as we have already seen. The Chief of a Prefecture enjoyed considerable dignity. He had a power to assemble the ten communities within his district. and presided himself over all assemblies of this sort, as well ordinary as extraordinary; he was at the same time head of the religion within his Prefecture. It was he who appointed the sacrifices, and other religious ceremonies, which were celebrated in the same place where they regulated their political and civil affairs. There lay an appeal to these Assemblies from the sentence pronounced by the magistrates of the Bailiwicks, and here were determined

In Iceland and Norway, all crimes were rated at a certain number of Marks. The Mark was divided into eight parts, each of which was equivalent to six ells of such stuff, as made their ordinary cloaths. Consequently a Mark was in value equal to 48 ells of this cloath. Now a Mark consisted of somewhat more than an ounce of fine silver. A cow commonly cost two marks and a half. Hence we may judge of the quantity of silver that was then in those countries. But this remark must not be extended to Denmark, which was apparently richer. See Arngrim. Jon. Crymog. lib. i. p. 86. *First Edit.*

terminated whatever disputes arose between those inferior communities. Here also the prefect received the tax, which each citizen was obliged to pay towards the expences of the religious worship; and here he judged, in the quality of pontiff, such as were accused of profaning temples, of speaking irreverently of the gods, or of any other act of impiety. The penalties inflicted on criminals of this sort consisted for the most part of fines, which the assemblies empowered the prefect to levy, in order to lay them out in repair of the temples. But when any affair occurred of great importance, or which concerned the whole province, then the members, or perhaps only the deputies of the three Prefectures met together and composed, what they called the States of the Quarter, or Province. These States did not assemble regularly like the others, who were required to meet at least once a year; nor do we know exactly what were the objects of their deliberations. All that one can conjecture is, that they had recourse to it, as to an extraordinary means of terminating such quarrels as arose between the communities of the different Prefectures, or to obviate some danger which threatened the whole province in general.

Superior to all these Assemblies of the lesser Communities and Provinces, were the STATES GENERAL of the whole island (*Alting*), which answered to the *Als-heriar-ting* of the other Scandinavian nations, to the *Wittena Gemot*, or Parliament of the Anglo-Sax-

ons *, to the *Champs de Mars*, or *de May* of the French, and to the *Cortes* of the Spaniards, &c. These assembled every year, and each citizen of Iceland thought it his honour and his duty to be present at them. The president of this great assembly was Sovereign Judge of the island. He possessed this office for life, but it was conferred upon him by the States. His principal business was to convoke the General Assembly, and to see the observance of the laws; hence the name of *Lagman*, or Man of the Laws, was given to this magistrate. He had a power of examining before the General Estates, and of reversing all the sentences pronounced by inferior judges throughout the island, of annulling their ordinances, and even of punishing them, if the complaints brought against them were well-founded. He could propose the enacting of new laws, the repealing or changing of the old ones: and if they passed in the General Assembly, it was his business to put them in execution. After this people began to have written laws, and the whole island had adopted one common form of jurisprudence, it was the Supreme Judge who had the keeping of the original authentic copy, to which all the others were to be conformable. To his judgment, and that of the assembly, lay an appeal from the

* *Al-ting* is compounded of *All*, *Wittena-Gemot*, "The Meeting of all, and *Ting*, a court of justice, "the Wise-men." It is evident, also: *Ali-beriar-ting* signifies, that all these expressions convey the "The Court of all the Lords." same idea.

the sentences given in the inferior courts. The Bailiffs or Prefects, whose sentence he revised, were obliged to judge the cause over again in his presence, and he afterwards pronounced sentence both on the contending parties, and on the judges. The fear of being condemned and punished before so numerous an assembly, was (as Arngrim well remarks) a great check upon all these subaltern judges, and served to keep every magistrate within the bounds of his duty. Commonly the Session of these General Estates lasted sixteen days, and they shew at this time the place of their meeting, which began and ended with solemn sacrifices. It was chiefly during that session, that the Sovereign Judge exercised his authority. Out of this assembly his power seems not to have been considerable: But he was at all times treated with great honour and respect; and was always considered as the oracle of the laws and protector of the people. The Icelandic chronicles carefully note the year, wherein each Judge was elected, and the time was computed by the years of his election, as among the Lacedemonians by those of the EPHORI. We see by the list, which Arngrim has preserved of them, that there were thirty-eight from the beginning of the commonwealth to its dissolution: And we find in this number the celebrated historian Snorro Sturleson, whom I have already introduced to the reader's knowledge.

Such was the constitution of a republic, which is at present quite forgotten in the North, and utterly unknown through the rest of Europe even to men of

much reading, notwithstanding the great number of poets and historians, which that republic produced. But fame is not the portion of indigent nations, especially when remote, unconnected with the rest of mankind, and placed under a rigorous climate. It is easy to discover here the genius of all the ‘ Gothic *’ tribes, and their notions of government. That distribution of the people into different communities subordinate to one another, that right of being judged every one by the members of his own community †, that care of watching over each citizen committed to the community of which he was a member, those general assemblies of the whole nation, with whom alone the legislative power was deposited, &c. All these institutions existed among the Germans already in the time of Tacitus, and without doubt long before. They prevailed in Denmark and Sweden, and we find numerous traces of them at this day. They were carried into Iceland, and there brought to perfection. They followed the Saxons into England; and when the times of confusion had caused them to wear out of memory, the great Alfred immortalized his name by reviving them. It would be easy to shew traces of them in the first establishments of the Franks in Gaul, of the Goths in Spain, and the same in several countries of Germany: But a display of so much erudition would be foreign to my plan. I only point out the way to the reader, and shall leave him to peruse

* Celtic. *Orig.*

† Teut. *Gylde*, or *Kelte*, collegium, sodalitas; whence perhaps *Celle*. E.

ruse at his leisure a subject so fruitful and so interesting, whether he is disposed to read what others have written on it, or to follow the train of his own reflections.

With regard to the laws, which prevailed in Scandinavia during the times of paganism, all that we can say for certain about them may be reduced within very small compass. Tradition, custom, maxims learnt by heart, and above all, simplicity of manners, served this people in the first ages instead of laws. They had maxims, which from time immemorial had been in the mouths of their sages, and which were thought to have been delivered to the first men by the gods themselves. Such were those of which the Icelandic poets have preserved some fragments, under the title of the "Sublime Discourse of Odin," as will be more particularly shewn in the sequel of this work *. It is doubtful whether the ancient Danes, as well as their neighbours, had written laws, before their conversion to Christianity. It is true, if we will believe Saxo the Grammatician, a king of Denmark named Frotho, who lived many ages before that period, published laws both civil and military, which were transmitted down to the time of that author. But this great antiquity renders the fact too suspicious to be admitted upon the single authority of such an historian as Saxo. It would be running too great a hazard to argue on a supposition, built on such weak foundations ;

* See Vol. II. towards the end.

foundations ; and that regard to truth, which ought to prevail over all other motives, obliges me for once to neglect domestic information, and to have recourse to foreign intelligence.

The ancient inhabitants of Germany and Scandinavia emerged but slowly from a state of nature. The ties which linked different families together were for a long time nothing but a confederacy to exercise violence, or to repel it. They possessed a great extent of lands, of which they cultivated but little, and resided on less : In short, they lived too separate from each other, to have any great need of civil laws ; and their Chiefs had too little authority to make them observed, if they had. Hence so many little societies and confederacies. Men banded together to revenge an injury : and the sentiment of honour, as well as interest, made them faithful to each other in an association so necessary to their welfare. A man's relations and friends who had not revenged his death, would instantly have lost that reputation which constituted their principal security. The inhabitants of Friezeland lived for a long time in a state of this kind. Most of the other German nations had already advanced a step beyond this in the time of Tacitus. Endless disorders, the unavoidable consequences of the right of self-revenge, had suggested to the wiser sort among them, the necessity of magistrates, who should interpose their authority in private quarrels, and oblige the offended person or his relations to receive a present from the aggressor ; that so a compensation
being

being made for an injury, might prevent the consequences of an eternal resentment, which from private persons might extend to the public. And for fear that this manner of terminating differences should become a new source of them, the compensation* was determined by an invariable rule, and commonly limited to a certain value in cattle, the only money known in those rude ages. A mark of submission of this sort satisfied mens pride as to the point of honour, gratified their avarice, and sufficiently secured them from a repetition of the offence. The Danes, in this respect, followed the steps of the neighbouring nations. Mere parity of reason might give one a right to suppose this, even if we had not more positive proofs; but without accumulating these unnecessarily, we need only cast our eyes on the ancient laws of the conquerors of Great Britain. It is well known that the Angles and Jutes, who shared with the Saxons in the honour of that conquest, were Danish nations, who came from Jutland and Sleswick. Now most of the laws of that people are still extant, and whoever will run over the collections, published by Lambard, Wilkins, and Leibnitz, will not doubt but they were all dictated by the same spirit, and were really the same in effect. It will be sufficient to quote a few particulars, to enable us to judge of their general spirit; for this is all I undertake to shew of them. As to their more particular minute circumstances, they have doubtless varied a thousand times,

in

* Scott. *kelchyn*, from Teut. *kelten*, compensate. E.

in different ages, and countries : But these we shall not descend to at present.

The laws of the Saxons, as regulated by Charlemagne, and published by Leibnitz *, established a composition in money for most sorts of crimes ; and for want of money this was to be paid in the flesh of cattle, every limb and joint of which had its known value regulated by law. They carefully distinguished the different degrees of offence, as well as those of the rank, which the offended person bore in the state. Accordingly, for the murder of a grandee or a prince the composition was 1440 *sous* †, and the same for every wound that deprived him of his hearing, sight, or use of his limbs. But if this injury was done to a free man, and not to a noble ‡, the composition was only 120 *sous* § ; at the same time, the murder of a slave was rated at 30 ; which was precisely the price of a simple blow, that produced neither swelling nor blackness, if given to a prince or noble. Much the same proportions were observed by the law of the Angles. Wounds given to a maiden were estimated at double the rate they would have been, if given to a man of the same rank of life. It was not the same with a woman who had borne children. Outrages against

* Leibnitz Rec. Brunswic. tom.

‡ The original is *Roda*, whence comes the word *Roturier*, by which

I.

† If the Author computes by modern money : It is 720 pence English, or about 3l. sterling. T.

the French express at present, One who is not a gentleman.

§ Sixty pence, or 5s. sterling. T.

against modesty were also valued with a degree of exactness, of which one would not have thought matters of that nature susceptible. "The laws of these people," says M. de Montesquieu, "judged of insults offered to men by the size of the wounds, nor did they shew more refinement as to the offences committed against women: So that they seem to have measured injuries, as one measures figures in geometry."

These laws vary more in what relates to theft. By the law of the Saxons, it was in most cases punished with death. By that of the Angles, which doubtless approaches nearer to the laws of the other Danish nations, the robber compounded by paying tripple the value of what he had stolen. But when government had acquired a little more stability, and when the manners were a little more civilized, men were not satisfied with opposing to the disorder a barrier so often ineffectual. The magistrates appointed to watch over the public peace, pretended that THEY were insulted as often as that peace was broken, and therefore over and above the composition which was to atone for the offence, they exacted a fine, either as a satisfaction due to the public, or as a recompence for the trouble given themselves in making up the difference, and in protecting the offender. These fines were for a long time all, or almost all the punishment, which could possibly prevail among a valiant and free people, who esteemed their blood too precious to be shed any other way than in battle. Their kings had
for

for many ages no other revenue than what arose from these fines, and from their own private demesnes : All other kinds of imposition were not known till long after that period of time, to which we at present confine our researches.

If this way of punishing crimes may justly pass for singular, that of establishing proofs in the administration of justice may be esteemed no less so. Here all the ignorance, all the barbarity of our ancestors manifest themselves so plainly, that it is not in the power of our reflections to add to them. Their embarrassment was so great when they endeavoured to distinguish truth from falsehood, that they were obliged to have recourse to the most strange expedients and most ridiculous practices. Thus they sometimes obliged the accused to produce a certain number of persons called **COMPURGATORS** ; not that these men had, or were supposed to have any knowledge of the affair in question, but they were simply to swear they were persuaded the accused spoke true. Besides this, they often appointed what was called the **JUDICIARY COMBAT**, and how absurd soever this custom was, it was so intimately connected with their opinions concerning destiny and providence, that it triumphed for a long time over Religion, Popes, and Councils ; and though a hundred times proscribed, as often revived and appeared again under different shapes. Lastly, when the discovery of truth appeared to them to exceed all human powers, they had recourse to supernatural means, and what they called **DIVINE JUDGMENTS**.

MENTS. They had many ways of consulting that oracle. For as, according to their notions, all the elements were animated by an Intelligence as incorruptible in its justice, as the Deity whence it sprung, they thought they had nothing to do but to unite the accused person to one of these divinities, and so oblige it to declare by the manner of its acting upon him, what judgment it entertained of his innocence. Thus sometimes they cast him into a deep water, tied about with cords : If he sunk, that is, if the Genius of the water received him into its bosom, it declared him to be innocent : If it rejected him, if he swam upon the surface, he was looked upon as convicted of the crime *. This was called the **WATERY-ORDEAL**.

VOL. I.

X

The

* This kind of proof was more dangerous, than it appears to have been at first sight ; for though a man thrown into the water commonly sinks at first to the bottom, yet as they tied him about with large cords, 'and withs,' he sometimes swam on the surface spite of his teeth. This kind of proof indeed, as well as that of Boiling Water, was only for persons of inferior rank. Others handled hot iron, or put their hands into a red-hot gauntlet, or walked blind-fold over burning plough-shares. If at the end of certain days there remained any marks of the fire on the hands or feet, the accused were judged guilty ; if not, he was ac-

quitted. There is reason to think that, notwithstanding they took all possible precaution, they also had recourse to certain preservatives against the effects of fire, and perhaps the same that mountebanks in our times make use of, as oft as they amuse the people with spectacles of the same kind. Besides this, men who were accustomed to hard labour, to the toils of hunting, and constant handling of arms, had rendered their skins so thick and callous, that they could not easily be hurt ; and as for the Ladies, they were generally allowed Champions to undergo the trial for them. *First Edit.*

The proof by fire, or FIERY-ORDEAL seems to have been more in use afterwards, and founded upon a different train of reasoning; for in things of this nature, we must not expect such rude minds to act very consistently.

* As for the ceremonies which accompanied these kinds of proof, the cases in which they were appointed, and the other minute circumstances, they varied in different times and places: And as imitation and habit perpetuate customs long after the causes of them have ceased, the ORDEAL was practised during many ages by men, who doubtless believed nothing about the genii presiding over the several elements, or the other doctrines of the ancient religion †. I shall not enter on the minute history of the ORDEAL, &c. which was not peculiar to the ancient Danes, and may be found described in other books ‡. I thought proper only to mark the connection between them and the doctrines of that Religion, which I described in the preceding chapters: A connection which has been
feldom

* From hence to the end of the chap. is omitted in the 2d edit. of the original. T. the WATERY ORDEAL, or Proof by Swimming, has been employed by the vulgar for the trial of

† Thus, long after Christianity was established among the Anglo-Saxons, king Edward the Confessor (a reputed saint) is said to have put his mother to the proof of the Burning Plough-Shares — And even down to our own times,

Witchcraft, whenever they could find means to put it in practice. T.

‡ Vid. Wormius in Monum. Danic. lib. i. c. ix. and Steph. Stephanus in his Notes on Saxe Grammaticus.

feldom attended to, and which shews that it is only for want of studying mankind, that they appear to act wholly without motives or principles of conduct. It was king Valdemar the second * to whom the glory belongs of having abolished this absurd and inhuman practice in Denmark †.

* He reigned from the year 1202, to 1241. T.

† I cannot conclude this subject without observing that we find some traces of the ORDEAL among the ancient Greeks and Romans.

Thus in the ANTIGONE of Sophocles, (Act. II. Sc. II.) we have the following remarkable passage, which shows it was not unknown in Greece,

“ The guards accus’d each other ; nought was prov’d,
 “ But each suspected each, and all deny’d,
 “ Offering in proof of innocence to GRASP
 “ The BURNING STEEL, to WALK THRO’ FIRE, and take
 “ Their solemn oath they knew not of the dead.”

See Franklin’s Sophocles and note on the above passage.—See also Stiernhok de Jur. Vet. Suec. lib. i. c. 8. apud Dalin. Sue. Rik. Hist. tom. i. ch. 7.

Pliny speaking of a feast, which the ancient Romans celebrated every year in honour of the sun,

observes that the priests, who were to be of the family of the Hirpiani, danced on this occasion bare-foot on burning coals without burning themselves: This was apparently a relique of the Fiery Ordeal, Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. vii. 2.

CHAPTER IX.

*The passion of the ancient Scandinavians for arms :
their valour : the manner in which they made war.
A digression concerning the state of population among
them.*

“ **R**OME had reckoned from its foundation fix
“ hundred and forty years, when the arms of
“ the Cimbri were first heard of among us. From
“ that time to the present have elapsed two hundred
“ and six years more. So long have we been in con-
“ quering Germany. And in the course of so tedious
“ a war, what various losses have been sustained by
“ each party? No nation hath given us more fre-
“ quent alarms; neither the Samnites, the Carthagi-
“ nians, the Spaniards, the Gauls, nor even the Par-
thians :

" thians : so much less vigour hath the despotic pow-
 " er of Arsaces had, than the liberty of the Germans.
 " For, except the defeat of Crassus, what hath the
 " conquered and prostrate East to object to the cur-
 " rent of our success? Whereas the Germans have
 " taken or defeated five generals of the Republic,
 " who commanded so many consular armies. They
 " cut off Varus and three legions from Augustus
 " himself. Nor was that advantage obtained with
 " impunity, which Marius gained over them in Ita-
 " ly, the divine Julius in Gaul, and Drusus, Tiberi-
 " us, and Germanicus in their own country. And
 " even presently after this, the tremendous threats of
 " Caligula became the object of their sport. A re-
 " spite followed, till profiting by our discord and ci-
 " vil wars, they attacked our legions in their winter
 " quarters, and even undertook the conquest of Gaul.
 " We have since driven them back beyond the Rhine:
 " but in these latter times, our victories over them
 " have been less real, than the pomp of our triumphs.
 " If this people cannot be brought to love us, at least
 " may they always hate each other! since in the pre-
 " sent declining fates of the empire, fortune can grant
 " us no greater favour, than the dissensions of our e-
 " nemies *."

Such was the opinion entertained of the German
 and northern nations, by the people who conquered
 the rest of the world. Such, according to the confes-
 sion

* Tacit. Germ. c. 37, et c. 33.

sion of Tacitus, was that martial courage, that ardour, that constancy in defending and avenging their liberty, which so early threatened the power of Rome, and in a few ages after overturned it. It is not my present business to write the history of that great revolution, which changed the face of Europe; but my subject leads me to disclose its causes, since they are contained in the opinions and manners which I am describing. We only want here that penetrating eye, that deep sense and energy of style, which distinguished the author I have been translating. The sources whence issued those torrents of people, which from the North overwhelmed all Europe, the principles which put them in motion, and gave them so much activity and force, these objects, so grand and interesting, have been but slightly and weakly treated of. The more enlightened people, who were the victims of these ravages, were too much pressed with the weight of their calamity, to have leisure to trace its remote causes. Like the thunder which remains unseen in the clouds till the moment it bursts forth, and whose nature we have no time to study while it is striking us; these unexpected irruptions would hardly become the objects of research, till after their effects were forgotten. Hence the relations that have been given us of them, are so uninteresting, confused and obscure: faults to which every history will be liable which only gives us a heap of facts, without being able to develop their causes. The greatest part then of the historical phenomena of the middle ages

can only be explained by a deep insight into the manners of the northern nations. It is only from thence we can ever be able to comprehend what could induce whole nations to transport themselves from one extremity of Europe to the other ; could break through the ties of country, which so strongly attach men to the places of their birth ; could render them unanimous in such strange projects, and make them thus spread themselves beyond their own boundaries with such exuberance and impetuosity.

I have already hinted, that the ancient Scandinavians breathed nothing but war, which was at once with them the source of honour, riches and safety. Their education, laws, prejudices, morality and religion, all concurred to make that their ruling passion and only object. From their most tender age they applied themselves to learn the military art ; they hardened their bodies, and accustomed themselves to cold, fatigue and hunger. They exercised themselves in running, in the chase, in swimming across the greatest rivers, and in handling their arms. The very sports of childhood itself, and of early youth were directed all towards this end : dangers were always intermingled with their play. For it consisted in taking frightful leaps, in climbing up the steepest rocks, in fighting naked with offensive weapons, in wrestling with the utmost fury : it was therefore common to see them at the age of fifteen years already grown robust men, and able to make themselves feared in combat. It was also at this age that their young men
became

became their own masters, which they did by receiving a sword, a buckler, and a lance. This ceremony was performed in some public meeting. One of the principal persons of the assembly armed the youth in public. " This, we are told by Tacitus, was his *Toga Virilis*, his entrance upon dignities. Before " this he made only part of a family, now he became " a member of the state." After this he was obliged to provide for his own subsistence, and was either now to live by hunting, or by joining in some excursion against an enemy. Particular care was taken to prevent these young soldiers from enjoying too early an acquaintance with the opposite sex, till their limbs had acquired all the vigour of which they were capable. Indeed they could have no hope to be acceptable to the women, but in proportion to the courage and address they had shown in war and in their military exercises. Accordingly we see in an ancient song, preserved by Bartholin *, a king of Norway extremely surprized that, as he could perform eight different exercises, his mistress should presume to reject his suit. I shall frequently have occasion to produce new instances of this manner of thinking among their women : it is sufficient at present to observe, that they were not likely to soften their children by too much delicacy or indulgence. These tender creatures were generally born in the midst of camps and armies. Their eyes, from the moment they were first opened,

saw

* See a translation of this in the second volume.

saw nothing but military spectacles, arms, effusion of blood, and combats either real or in sport: thus as they grew up from their infancy, their souls were early disposed to imbibe the cruel prejudices of their fathers.

Their laws for the most part (like those of the ancient Lacedemonians) seemed to know no other virtues than those of a military nature, and no other crimes but cowardice. They inflicted the greatest penalties on such as fled the first in battle. The laws of the ancient Danes, according to Saxo, excluded them from society, and declared them infamous. Among the Germans this was sometimes carried so far as to suffocate cowards in mud; after which, they covered them over with hurdles: to shew, says Tacitus, that though the punishment of crimes should be public, there are certain degrees of cowardice and infamy which ought to be buried in eternal silence. The most flattering distinctions were reserved for such as had performed some signal exploit; and the laws themselves distributed men into different ranks according to their different degrees of courage. Frotho, king of Denmark, had ordained, according to Saxo, that whoever solicited an eminent post in the army, ought upon all occasions to attack one enemy; to face two; to retire only one step back from three; and not to make an actual retreat till assaulted by four. Hence was formed that prejudice so deeply rooted among these people, that there was no other way to acquire glory, but by the profession of arms, and a

fanatic valour : a prejudice, the force of which displayed itself without obstruction at a time, when luxury was unknown ; when that desire, so natural, and so active among men, of drawing upon themselves the attention of their equals, had but one single object and support ; and when their country and their fellow citizens had no other treasure but the fame of their exploits, and the terror thereby excited in their neighbours.

The rules of justice, far from checking these prejudices, had been themselves warped and adapted to their bias. It is no exaggeration to say, that all the ' Gothic and' Celtic nations entertained opinions on this subject, quite opposite to the theory of our times. They looked upon war as a real act of justice, and esteemed force an incontestible title over the weak, a visible mark that God had intended to subject them to the strong. They had no doubt but the intentions of this divinity had been to establish the same dependance among men which there is among animals, and setting out from the principle of the inequality of men, as our modern civilians do from that of their equality, they inferred thence that the weak had no right to what they could not defend. This maxim, which formed the basis of the law of nations among the ancient inhabitants of Europe, being dictated by their most darling passion, we cannot wonder that they should so steadily act up to it in practice. And which, after all, is worst ; to act and think as they did, or like the moderns, with better principles to act as ill ?

As

As to the ancient nations, we attribute nothing to them here but what is justified by a thousand facts. They adopted the above maxim in all its rigour, and gave the name of Divine Judgment not only to the JUDICIARY COMBAT, but to conflicts and battles of all sorts: victory being in their opinion the only certain mark by which Providence enables us to distinguish those, whom it has appointed to command others. "Valour, says a German warrior in Tacitus, is the only proper goods of men. The Gods range themselves on the side of the strongest *."

Lastly, Religion, by annexing eternal happiness to the military virtues, had given the last degree of activity to the ardour and propensity these people had for war. There were no fatigues, no dangers nor torments capable of damping a passion so well countenanced, and the desire of meriting so great a reward. We have seen what motives this religion offered to its votaries; and we cannot fail to recall them in reading some instances of that courage which distinguished the ancient Scandinavians, and of their contempt of death itself, which I shall produce from the most authentic chronicles of Iceland.

History informs us, that HAROLD surnamed BLAA-TAAND or BLUE TOOTH (a king of Denmark, who reigned in the middle of the tenth century) had founded on the coasts of Pomerania, which he had subdued,
a city

* Tacit. hist. lib. IV. c. 17. Pelloutier hist. des Celtes, tom. I. p. 415.

a city named Julin or Jomsburg; where he sent a colony of young Danes, and bestowed the government on a celebrated warrior named Palnatoko. This new Lycurgus had made of that city a second Sparta, and every thing was directed to this single end, to form complete foldiers. The author who has left us the history of this colony assures us, that "it was forbidden there so much as to mention the name of Fear, even in the most imminent dangers*." No citizen of Jomsburg was to yield to any number however great, but to fight intrepidly without flying, even from a very superior force. The sight of present and inevitable death would have been no excuse with them for making any the least complaint, or for shewing the slightest apprehension. And this legislator really appears to have eradicated from the minds of most of the youths bred up under him, all traces of that sentiment so natural and so universal, which makes men think on their destruction with horror. Nothing can shew this better than a single fact in their history, which deserves to have place here for its singularity. Some of them having made an irruption into the territories of a powerful Norwegian lord, named Haquin, were overcome spite of the obstinacy of their resistance; and the most distinguished among them being made prisoners, were, according to the custom of those times, condemned to death. The

news

* See Jomfwikinga Saga, in Bartholin. de caus. contempt. mort. lib. i. c. 5.

news of this, far from afflicting them, was, on the contrary, received with joy. The first who was led to punishment was content to say, without changing countenance, and without expressing the least sign of fear, "Why should not the same happen to me as did to my father? He died, and so must I." A warrior, named Thorchill, who was to cut off the head of the second, having asked him what he felt at the sight of death, he answered, that "he remembered too well the laws of Jomsburg to utter any words that denoted fear." The third, in reply to the same question, said, "he rejoiced to die with glory, and that he preferred such a death to an infamous life like that of Thorchill's." The fourth made an answer much longer and more extraordinary. "I suffer with a good heart; and the present hour is to me very agreeable. I only beg of you," added he, addressing himself to Thorchill, "to be very quick in cutting off my head; for it is a question often debated by us at Jomsburg, whether one retains any sense after being beheaded. I will therefore grasp this knife in my hand; if after my head is cut off, I strike it towards you, it will shew I have not lost all sense: if I let it drop, it will be a proof of the contrary. Make haste therefore, and decide the dispute." 'Thorchill' adds the historian, 'cut off his head in most expeditious manner, but the knife, as might be expected, dropt from his hand.' The fifth shewed the same tranquillity, and died rallying and jeering his enemies. The sixth begged of

Thorchill,

Thorchill, that he might not be led to punishment like a sheep * ; “ strike the blow in my face,” said he, “ I will sit still without shrinking ; and take notice whether I once wink my eyes, or betray one sign of fear in my countenance. For we inhabitants of Jomsburg are used to exercise ourselves in trials of this sort, so as to meet the stroke of death, without once moving.” He kept his promise before all the spectators, and received the blow without betraying the least sign of fear, or so much as winking his eyes†. The seventh, says the historian, “ was a very beautiful young man, in the flower of his age. His long fair hair, as fine as silk, floated in curls and ringlets on his shoulders. Thorchill asked him what he thought of death ? I receive it willingly, said he, since I have fulfilled the greatest duty of life, and have seen all those put to death whom I would not survive. I only beg of you one favour, not to let my hair be touched by a slave, or stained with my blood ‡.”

This constancy in the last moments was not, however, the peculiar effect of the laws and education of the

* Barthol. lib. i. c. 5. p. 51.

† Barthol. *ibid.*

‡ In Bartholin it is, *Id unicum a te peto, ne mancipia me ad mortem ducant, ne quis te inferior capillum meum teneat, &c.* M. Mallet has omitted the circumstance of the

hair in his 2d. edit.

Bartholin gives the speech of the *FIGHTH* person, which, though spirited, being not so striking as the former, our author has omitted. T.

the Jomsbürgians. The other Danes have often given the same proofs of intrepidity ; or rather this was the general character of all the inhabitants of Scandinavia. It was with them an instance of shameful pusillanimity to utter upon such occasions the least groan, or to change countenance, but especially to shed tears. The Danes, says Adam of Bremen *, “ are remarkable for this, that if they have committed any crime, they “ had rather suffer death than blows. There is no “ other punishment for them but either the axe, or “ servitude. As for groans, complaints and other “ bemoanings of that kind, in which WE find relief, “ they are so detested by the Danes, that they think “ it mean to weep for their sins, or for the death of “ their dearest relations.” But if a private soldier looked upon tears as peculiar to weakness or slavery, their great warriors, the chiefs, all who aspired to fame and glory, carried the contempt of death much further. King Regner, who, as I have once before observed, died singing the pleasure of receiving death in the field of battle, cries out at the end of a stanza, “ the hours of my life are passed away, I shall die “ laughing † :” And many passages in ancient history plainly shew that this was not a poetical hyperbole. Saxo, speaking of a single combat, says, that one of the champions FELL, LAUGHED, AND DIED, an epitaph

* Adam Bremen. de situ Daniæ, c. 213.

† Barthol. p. 4.

taph as short as energetic *. An officer belonging to a king of Norway, celebrating in verse the death of his master, concludes his elogium with these words, " It shall hereafter be recorded in histories, that king " Halfer died laughing †." A warrior having been thrown upon his back, in wrestling with his enemy, and the latter finding himself without his arms, the vanquished person promised to wait without changing his posture while he fetched a sword to kill him ; and he faithfully kept his word. To die with his arms in his hand was the vow of every free man ; and the pleasing idea they had of this kind of death, would naturally lead them to dread such as proceeded from disease and old age. In the joy, therefore, which they testified at the approach of a violent death, they might frequently express no more than their real sentiments, though doubtless it was sometimes intermixt with ostentation. The general tenor of their conduct proves that they were most commonly sincere in this ; and such as know the power which education, example and prejudice have over men, will find no difficulty in receiving the multitude of testimonies, which antiquity hath left us of their extraordinary valour. " The " philosophy of the Cimbri," says Valerius Maximus, " is gay and couragious : they leap for joy in a " battle, that they are going to quit life in so glorious
ous

* Saxo Gram. lib. ii. et vide Bodvar's Biarka Saga apud Barthol.
lib. i. c. i. p. 5.

† Barthol. p. 6.

ous a manner : in sickness they lament for fear of
 “ a shameful and miserable end *.” Cicero remarks,
 that in proportion as men are intrepid in war, they
 are weak and impatient under bodily pains. “ Happy
 “ in their mistake,” says Lucan, “ are the people
 “ who live beneath the Pole ! persuaded that death is
 “ only a passage to a long life, they are undisturbed
 “ by the most grievous of all fears, that of dying.
 “ Hence they eagerly run to arms, and their minds
 “ are capable of meeting death : hence they esteem it
 “ cowardice to spare a life which they shall so soon
 “ recover †.” The history of ancient Scandinavia is
 full of passages expressive of this manner of thinking.
 The illustrious warriors, who found themselves wast-
 ing by some lingering illness, were not always con-
 tent barely to excuse their fate. They often availed
 themselves of the few moments that were yet remain-
 ing, to shake off life by a way more glorious. Some
 of them would be carried into a field of battle, that

VOL. I.

Z

they

* Val. Max. lib. ii. cap. 6. p. 11. Lucan's words is given in the text,
 Cicero Tusc. Quæst. lib. ii. cap. the Reader will be glad to see the
 alt. original here.

† As only a loose paraphrase of

*Orbe alio longæ, canitis si cognita, vita
 Mors media est. Certe populi quos despicit Arctos
 Felices errore suo ! quos ille timorum
 Maximus baud urget lethi metus ; inde ruendi
 In ferrum mens prona viris, animæque capaces
 Mortis : et ignarum reditura partere vita.*

Lib. B

they might die in the engagement : others flew themselves : many procured this melancholy service to be performed them by their friends, who considered this as a most sacred duty. " There is on a mountain in " Iceland," says the author of an old Icelandic romance *, " a rock so high, that no animal can fall " from the top and live. Here men betake themselves when they are afflicted and unhappy. From " this place all our ancestors, even without waiting " for sickness, have departed unto Odin. It is useless, therefore, to give ourselves up to groans and " complaints

* The old SAGA, or history here quoted, contains a mixture of truth and fiction, but shews us plainly what opinion was held of SUICIDE, and how commonly it was practised heretofore in the North.

Procopius attributes the same thing to the Heruli, a Gothic peo-

ple. *Apud Herulos, says he, nec senibus, nec egrotis fas erat vitam producere : et si quem senium occupasset, aut morbus, rogare is cogebatur propinquos, ut quamprimum hominum numero eum tollerent.* Procop. Goth. lib. ii. c. 14.

Silius says of the ancient inhabitants of Spain,

*Prodiga gens animæ, & prosperare facillima mortem ;
Namque ubi transcendis florentes viribus annos,
Impatiens ævi spernit novisse senectam
Et fati modus in dextra est.*

All these authorities, which it would be easy to multiply, prove that I attribute nothing to the northern nations, which is not positively confirmed by historians, as well strangers as their own countrymen ; and that one cannot re-

proach the ancient Scandinavians with these barbarous prejudices, without condemning at the same time the ancestors of half the nations of Europe. Vid. Pelloutier, tom. ii. lib. 3. ch. 18. *First Edit.*

“ complaints, or to put our relations to needless expences, since we can easily follow the example of our fathers, who have all gone by the way of this rock.” There was such another in Sweden, appropriated to the same use, which was figuratively called the **HALL OF ODIN**, because it was a kind of vestibule or entry to the palace of that God *. Lastly, if none of these reliefs were afforded, and especially when Christianity had banished these cruel practices, the heroes consoled themselves at least by putting on complete

* We have a particular description of this place by Sir William Temple; which it will be worth while to produce at large,

“ I will not,” he says, “ trouble myself with more passages out of the Runic poems concerning this superstitious principle (of preferring a violent death, &c.) but will add a testimony of it, which was given me at Nipueguen, by Count Oxenstern, the first of the Swedish ambassadors in that assembly. In discourse upon this subject, and in confirmation of this opinion having been general among the Goths of those countries; he told me there was still in Sweden a place which was a memorial of it, and was called **ODIN’S HALL**. That it was a great bay in the

“ sea, encompassed on three sides with steep and rugged rocks; and that in the time of the Gothic paganism, men that were either sick of diseases they esteemed mortal or incurable, or else grown invalid with age, and thereby past all military action, and fearing to die meanly and basely (as they esteemed it) in their beds, they usually caused themselves to be brought to the nearest part of these rocks, and from thence threw themselves down into the sea, hoping by the boldness of such a violent death, to renew the pretence of admission into the Hall of Odin which they had lost, by failing to die in combat, and with their arms.” *Miscellanea, Part II. Essay 3. part 4.*

plete armour as soon as they found their end approaching; thus making (as it were) a solemn protest against the kind of death to which they were forced involuntarily to submit. After this, it will not be thought wonderful that the clients of a great lord, and all those who enlisted under a chief for some expedition, should make a vow not to survive their commander; or that this vow should always be performed in all its rigour*. Neither will it be surprising that private soldiers should sometimes form among themselves a kind of society or confraternity, in which the several members engaged, at the expence of their own lives, to avenge the death of their associates, provided it were honourable and violent. All these dangers were, in their opinion, so many favourable and precious occasions of meriting glory and eternal happiness. Accordingly, we never find any among these people guilty of cowardice, and the bare suspicion of that vice was always attended with universal contempt. A man who had lost his buckler, or who had received a wound behind, durst never more appear in public. In the history of England†, we see a famous Danish captain named Siward, who had sent his son to attack a province in Scotland, ask with great coolness those who brought the news of his death,

* The same thing prevailed among diverse Celtic nations: they

called those who thus engaged themselves to their chiefs, *soldurii*. *First Edit.*
† Brompton. Ubb. Jom. Chron. p. 946.

death, whether he had received his wounds behind or before? The messengers telling him he was wounded before, the father cries out, "then I have only cause
 " to rejoice: for any other death would have been
 " unworthy of me and my son." A conqueror could not exercise a more terrible vengeance upon his captives, than to condemn them to slavery. "There is," says Saxo, "in the heart of the Danes, an insurmountable aversion to servitude, which makes them esteem it the most dreadful of all conditions *." The same historian describes to us a king of Denmark, named Frotho, taken in battle by a king his enemy, and obstinately refusing all offers of life which that prince could make him. "To what end," says he, "should I reserve myself for so great a disgrace? What good can the remainder of my life afford me, that can counter-balance the remembrance of my misfortunes, and the regret which my misery would cause me? And even if you should restore me my kingdom, if you should bring me back my sister, if you should repair all the loss of my treasure, would all this recover my honour? All these benefits would never replace me in my former state, but future ages would always say, FROTHO HATH BEEN TAKEN BY HIS ENEMY." In all combats, and the number of them is prodigious in the ancient histories of the North, we always find both parties continually repeating the words glory, honour,

* Saxo Gramm. lib. xii.

nour, and contempt of death, and by this means raising one another to that pitch of enthusiasm, which produces extraordinary actions. A general never forgot to remind his troops of these motives when he was going to give battle; and not unfrequently they prevented him, and flew to the engagement of themselves, chanting songs of war, marching in cadence, and raising shouts of joy.

Lastly, like the heroes of Homer, those of ancient Scandinavia, in the excess of their over-boiling courage, dared to defy the Gods themselves. "Though they should be stronger than the Gods," says a boastful warrior speaking of his enemies, "I would absolutely fight them *." And in Saxo Grammaticus we hear another wishing ardently that he could but meet with Odin, that he might attack him: expressing his mind by verses to this effect. "Where at present is he, whom they call ODIN, that warrior or so completely armed, who hath but one eye to guide him? Ah, if I could but see him, this renowned spouse of Frigga; in vain should he be covered with his snow-white buckler, in vain mounted upon his lofty steed, he should not leave his abode of Lethra without a wound. It is lawful to encounter a warrior god †."

A

* Bartholin. lib. i. c. 6.

author relates that a Danish prince,

† SAXO GRAM. lib. ii. apud Barthol. lib. i. c. 8.—The same

named Hother, resisted the united forces of Odin, Thor, and the squadron

A passion so strong, so general and so blind could not but give a tincture of its character to whatever it could possibly extend to ; and therefore we must not be surprized that they should take it into their heads to deify the instruments of war, without which that passion could not have been gratified. From the earliest antiquity, they paid divine honours to their swords, their battle-axes, and their pikes. The Scythians commonly substituted a sword as the most proper symbol to represent the supreme god. It was by planting a spear in the middle of a field, that they usually

drons of the gods. " And the victory," he adds, " would have remained with the gods, if Hother, breaking through their thickest ranks, and assailing them with such fury as a mortal can superior beings, had not rendered the club of the god Thor useless, by cutting it off at the handle. Weakened by this sudden and unexpected stroke, the gods were forced to betake themselves to flight." [Saxo. lib. iii. Barthol. lib. i. c. 6.] It was a received opinion among them, that a man might attack and fight the gods ; and it is needless to remark with Saxo, that these were only imaginary deities. No one is tempted to take such relations literally, and they only deserve to be mentioned because they shew us what manner of thinking prevailed among the people who invented stories of this sort. From them we may at least infer that the confidence with which their bodily strength and courage inspired these ancient Danes must have been excessive to make them brave, and defy whatever was most formidable in their system of religion. But Diomedes's wounding Venus concealed in a cloud, his defying Jupiter, as well as the other combats of men with the gods described in the *Iliad*, have already shown us, to what a degree of intoxication and madness men may arrive, who think themselves above all fear. *First Edit.*

finally marked out the place set apart for prayers and sacrifices : and when they had relaxed from their primitive strictness, so far as to build temples and set up idols in them, they yet preserved some traces of the ancient custom, by putting a sword in the hands of ODIN's statues. The respect they had for their arms made them also swear by instruments so valuable and so useful, as being the most sacred things they knew. Accordingly, in an ancient Icelandic poem, a Scandinavian, to assure himself of a person's good faith, requires him to swear "by the shoulder of a horse, and "the edge of a SWORD*." This oath was usual more especially on the eve of some great engagement : the soldiers engaged themselves by an oath of this kind, not to flee though their enemies should be never so superior in number.

From

* The passage at large, as translated by Bartholin (lib. i. cap. 6.) is,

*Juramenta mihi prius omnia dabit
Ad laeus navis, et ad scuti extremitatem,
Ad equi armen, et ad GLADII ACIEM, &c.*

It is therefore with peculiar propriety and decorum (as is well observed by his commentators) that our Shakespear makes his PRINCE

OF DENMARK call upon his companions to SWEAR UPON HIS SWORD :

— — Come hither gentlemen,
And lay your hands againe upon my sword,
Never to speake of this that you have heard,
Swearc by my SWORD. — —

HAMLET. A. I. sc. ult. T.

From the same source proceeded that propensity to duels and single combats, so remarkable among all the "Gothic" nations, and which of all their barbarous customs, has been most religiously kept up by their present descendants. In Denmark, and through all the North, they provoked a man to fight a duel, by publicly calling him NIDDING or "infamous †:"

VOL. I.

A 2

for

* Celtic. Orig.

† In the same manner as giving the LIE is the highest provocation in modern times, because it implies a charge of meanness, falsehood and cowardice: so the word NIDDING or NITHING anciently included in it the ideas of extreme wickedness, meanness and infamy. It signified a villanous base wretch, a dastardly coward, a sordid stingy worthless creature: (*Homo sceleratus, nequam, apostata, fadifragus, summe infamis, sordide parvus, &c.* being derived by the greatest etymologist of the present age from the Icelandic NYÐ, *rejectione, contumelia, &c.* Vid. LYE, in Junii cymolog. Anglican.) No wonder that an imputation of this kind should be so reproachful among an open and brave people: or that they would rather do any thing than incur it.

We have a remarkable proof in

English history how much this name was dreaded and abhorred by our ancestors. King William Rufus having occasion to draw together suddenly a body of forces, only sent word to all such as held of him in fee, that those who did not repair to his assistance, should be deemed NITHING; and without further summons, they all flocked to his standard. *Rex irā inflammatus*, says Matthew Paris, *stipendarios milites suos Anglos congregavit, et absque morā, ut ad obsidionem veniant, jubet, nisi velint sub nomine NITHING, quod Latine NEQUAM sonat, recensei. Angli (qui nihil contumeliosius et vilius estimant quam hujusmodi ignominioso vocabulo notari) catervatim ad regem confluentes, ingentes copias faciunt.* (M. Par. sub ann. 1089.) The word NITHING for some ages after continued in use in this kingdom, but chiefly in the sense of STINGY,

NIGGARDLY,

for he who had received so deep a stain, without endeavouring to wash it out with the blood of his adversary, would have lost much more than the life he was so desirous to save. Banished by public indignation from the society of men, degraded from his quality of citizen, and scarce regarded as a human creature, he had nothing left for it but a shameful and insecure flight.

The dreadful consequences of their sensibility with regard to what we falsely call HONOUR, extended often from private persons to a whole people; and nations, blind to their true welfare, waged long and cruel wars for such chimerical interests as really ought not to have armed one single individual against another. Under the reign of Harald Blaastand, king of Denmark, the Icelanders provoked by his having detained one of their ships laden with merchandize, flew for revenge to a species of arms that were familiar to them, and made verses upon him so very satirical, that Harald, stung to the quick, sent out a fleet
to

NIGGARDLY, &c. The Translator has seen an ancient MS. poem, that was written between the reigns of Edward III. and Edward IV. in which a person is thus exhorted,

*Looke thou be kind and curteous aye,
Of meate and drinke be never Nitbing.*

which sense of the word still obtains in Denmark, as we learn from Bartholin. *Denotat NIDING modernis Danis virum sordide parcum atque tenacem.* Lib. 1. c. 7. p. 98. T.

to ravage the island. This obliged the inhabitants to make a law, which is still extant in their ancient code, forbidding any person, under capital punishment, to compose satirical verses upon the kings of Denmark, Sweden, or Norway.

After so many efforts to acquire glory, it was very natural to think how to perpetuate it. To this end the ancient Scandinavians employed various means suitable to the grossness and rudeness of the times ; which if they have deceived the expectation of those who hoped for fame and immortality from them, have done them no great injustice. The most common method consisted in burying the heroes under little hills which they raised in the middle of some plain *, and

* Vide Bartholin. de caus. contempt. à Dan. mortis, lib. i. c. 8.

There is room to believe that this custom of burying the dead under little hills or mounts of earth prevailed among many of the ancient inhabitants of Europe. Isidore speaks of it as a general

custom. *Apud majores, he says, Potentes aut sub montibus, aut in montibus sepeliuntur.* (Orig. lib. xv. c. 11.) And Virgil and Servius expressly attribute it to the ancient Italians: See Servius on that verse of Aen. II.

——— *Fuit ingens mons sub alto
Regis Dercenni terreno in aggeris bustum.*

This custom Bartholin thinks Odin brought with him into the North out of Scythia ; where it anciently prevailed, as we learn from Herodotus, lib. iv. c. 71. And

Mallet assures us that some travellers " have seen in Crim Tary (part of the ancient Scythia) and in the neighbouring countries, artificial hills like those

and in giving to these hillocks, and sometimes to the plains themselves the name of the person who was there interred. This rude monument kept up at the same time the memory of the hero, and the emulation of

“ those which are found in Denmark and throughout all the “ North ” [Mallet. *First Edit.*] See also Bell’s *Travels*, vol. i. This Traveller found these sepulchral hills in his journey to China.

We have in England many ancient monuments of this kind, which are of such remote antiquity that it is not easy to decide whether they ought to be ascribed to our Gothic ancestors the Saxons and Danes; or to the more ancient inhabitants of ‘Gaulish’ race, viz. the Britons, &c. Some antiquaries are for referring every vestige of this sort to the times of the Druids: but it is very certain that the ancient Scandinavians buried in the same manner. indeed, this sort of monument is so simple and obvious, that it has doubtless prevailed among many nations of very different original.

Monuments of this kind particularly abound in the south-west parts of this island. “ There are “ many in Wiltshire, round and “ topped, which are called Burrows or Barrows; perhaps

“ raised in memory of the soldiers “ slain there: For bones are found “ in them; and I have read that “ it was a custom among the northern people, that every soldier “ who survived a battle, should “ bring a helmet full of earth towards raising of monuments for “ their slain fellows.” So far from Camden: to which Gibson adds, that “ upon these downs (in Wiltshire) are several sorts of Barrows. 1. Small circular trenches “ with very little elevation in the “ middle. 2. Ordinary barrows. 3. Barrows with ditches round “ them. 4. Large oblong barrows, some with trenches round “ them, others without. 5. Ob- “ long barrows with stones set up “ all round them.” Of this last sort, “ that large oblong barrow, “ called Milbarrow, is more especially remarkable, as being “ environed with great stones about “ 6 or 7 feet high:” which was doubtless “ the sepulchre of some “ Danish commander.”—Camden’s *Britannia* by Gibson, 1722. Vol. i. p. 127, &c. T.

of the neighbouring inhabitants. We find in Denmark at this day a great number of such artificial hills, which bear the name of some warrior, or king of ancient times *.

They commonly pitched upon some public place, some great road, some fountain or other well-frequented spot, as the most proper to raise these tombs in. They adorned them frequently with one or more large stones and epitaphs, as will be explained when I come to speak of the funerals of this people. But above all, they had recourse to the art of poetry, when they were disposed to immortalize their kings or great captains. The SCALDS or bards were employed to compose odes or songs, which related all their most shining exploits, and sometimes the whole history of their lives. These songs were propagated from one reciter to another : and there was no public solemnity in which they were not sung or chanted. The praises which these poets gave to valour, the warlike enthusiasm which animated their verses, the great care men took to learn them from their infancy, being

* Of this kind was the tomb of HAMLET, as described by Saxo, *Insignis ejus sepultura ac nomine campus apud Jutiam extat*, which field we are told is called AMLETSHEDE to this day. (Saxo. lib. iv. Barthol. p. 119.) In like manner HUBBESTOWE in Devonshire received its name from HUBBA the

Dane, who was slain and buried there in the year 879 ; as an ancient historian thus relates it, *Dani cadaver HUBBE inter occisos invenerunt, illud cum clamore maximo spectaverunt, cumulum apponentes HUBBE-JEWE vocaverunt*. Brompton ad ann. 873. Vid. Camden. Gibson. vol. i. p. 47. Barth. lib. i. c. 8. T.

ing all of them the natural effects of the ruling passion of this people, served in their turn to strengthen and extend it. Lastly, the common objects which they usually had before their eyes, the rocks scattered all over the country, the bucklers, the trophies raised in the field of battle, the walls and hangings of their houses, all contributed to preserve the memory of great actions and intrepid warriors, by means of the Runic characters, the hieroglyphics, and the symbols, which were engraven or inscribed upon them.

A people who nourished so strong a passion for war, could seldom be at a loss for occasions of it. Accordingly the ancient Scandinavians were continually involved in one hostile dispute or other, and their whole history would have consisted of nothing else but melancholy and disgusting details of these wars, if they had been at the needless pains to write it. But the little that is left of their history is more than sufficient to satisfy the curiosity of those who admire courage, no matter with what spirit it is animated; and who are astonished that men should be so prodigal of their lives, when they were ignorant of the art how to render them agreeable. We have already observed, that the inhabitants of Germany and the North were accustomed every spring to hold a general assembly, at which every free-man appeared completely armed, and ready to go upon any expedition. At this meeting they considered in what quarter they should make war: they examined what causes of complaint had been received from the several neighbouring

bouring nations, their power or their riches, the easiness with which they might be overcome, the prospect of booty, or the necessity of avenging some injury. When they had determined on the war, and settled the plan of the campaign, they immediately began their march, furnished each of them with a proper quantity of provisions ; and almost every grown man in the country made haste to join the army thus tumultuously assembled. We are not to wonder after this, that there should issue from the North swarms of soldiers, as formidable for their numbers as their valour : and we ought not hastily to conclude from hence, that Scandinavia formerly contained more people than it does at present. I know what is related of the incredible multitudes of men, which that country is said to have poured forth : but on the other hand, who does not know how much nations and historians have been, in all ages, inclined to exaggeration in this respect ; some being desirous to enhance the power of their country, and others, when it has been conquered, being willing to save its credit by making it yield only to superior numbers ? But the greatest part have been guilty of enlargement from no other motive than a blind love of the marvellous, authorised by the difficulty of pronouncing with certainty on a subject, in which men often commit great mistakes even after long researches. Besides this, it is very probable that many particular circumstances of those famous expeditions made by the Scandinavians, have contributed to countenance that name of

Vagina

Vagina gentium, which an historian gives their country *. For when these emigrations were made by sea, the promptitude and celerity with which they could carry their ravages from one coast to another, might easily multiply armies in the eyes of the people they attacked, and who heard many different irruptions spoken of almost at the same time. If on the contrary, they issued forth by land, they found every where on their march nations as greedy of fame and plunder as themselves, who joining with them, afterwards passed for people of the same original with the first swarm which put itself in motion. It should also be considered, that these emigrations did not all of them take place at the same time; and that after a nation was thus exhausted, it probably remained inactive until it had been able to recruit its numbers.* The vast extent of Scandinavia being in those times divided among many different people who were little known, and only described by some one general name, as that of Goths, for instance, or Normans, (that is Northern men),

* Jornandes de rebus Geticis.— has taken a comparison from Sir William Temple calls it THE thence to express exuberant multitude. and Milton tudes.

“ A multitude like which the populus North
 “ Pour’d never from her frozen loins, to pass
 “ Rhine or the Danaw, when her barbarous sons
 “ Came like a deluge on the South, and spread
 “ Beneath Gibraltar to the Lybian sands.”

Par. Lost. B. I. 351. T.

men), it could not exactly be ascertained from what country each troop originally came, and still less to what degree of depopulation each country was reduced after losing so great a quantity of its inhabitants. But what, in my opinion, best accounts for those numerous and frequent inundations of northern people, is that we have reason to believe, entire nations often engaged in enterprises of this sort: even the women and children sometimes marched in the rear of the armies, when a whole people either by inconstancy, by indigence, or the attraction of a milder climate, resolved to change their place of abode. Projects of this kind, it is true, appear very strange to us at present: but it is no less true that our ancestors the 'Goths and' Celts often engaged in them. In the time of Cæsar, the Helvetians, that is, the ancient inhabitants of Swisserland, desirous to establish themselves in Gaul, burnt their houses with their own hands, together with such of their effects as were not portable, and followed by their wives and children, set out with a resolution of never more returning home. What a multitude might not one expect such a nation to form? And yet Cæsar remarks* that according to the musters of the Helvetians themselves, found in their camp, they did not exceed three hundred and sixty thousand in all, including old men, women and children: a number, without dispute, small compared with that of the inhabitants of the same

VOL. I.

B b

country

* De bello Gallic. lib. i. c. 11.

country at present. The expedition of the Cimbri had also been an entire transplantation of that people: for it appears, by the request they made to the Romans, that their view was to obtain new lands to settle in. They, as well as the Helvetians, took with them their wives and children: and accordingly Cimbria (at present Sleswick and Jutland) continued after this emigration so depopulated, that at the end of two whole centuries, viz. in the time of Tacitus, it had not been able to recover itself, as we have already remarked from this historian, who had been himself in Germany.

The expedition of the Anglo-Saxons furnishes us with proofs no less convincing than those I have mentioned. The first Angles, who passed into Britain under the conduct of Hengist and Horsa, were a mere handful of men. The ancient Saxon Chronicle * informs us, that they had only three vessels, and it should seem that their number could not well exceed a thousand. Some other swarms having afterwards followed their example, their country was reduced to a mere desert †, and continued destitute of inhabitants for more than two centuries; being still in this state in the time of Bede, from whom the author of the Saxon Chronicle borrowed this fact. Let any one judge after this, whether it was always out of the superfluity of its inhabitants, as hath been frequently asserted,

* Chronic. Anglo-Sax. à Gibbon. edit. p. 13.

† See a Note on this subject towards the end of the next Chapter.

asserted, that the North poured forth its torrents on the countries they overwhelmed. For my part, I have not been able to discover any proofs that their emigrations ever proceeded from want of room at home : on the contrary, I find enough to convince me that their country would easily have received an additional number of inhabitants. When Alboin formed the project of leading the Lombards into Italy, he demanded auxiliaries from the Saxons, his allies. Twenty thousand Saxons, with their wives and children, accompanied the Lombards into Italy : and the kings of France sent colonies of Swabians to occupy the country which the Saxons had left desert. Thus we see the Saxons, who are thought to have been one of the most numerous people of Germany, could not send forth this feeble swarm without depopulating their own country : But this is not all. The twenty thousand Saxons, disagreeing with the Lombards, quitted Italy, and returned back (undiminished in number) into their own country, which they found possessed by the Swabians above-mentioned. This presently gave rise to a war, notwithstanding all the remonstrances of the Swabians, who, as an ancient historian * assures us, demonstrated to the Saxons, that both nations might easily share the country among them, and live all of them in it very commodiously. I make no doubt but there were throughout all Saxony, as well as Scandinavia, vast tracts of land which

* Paul. Diacon. de gest. Longobard. lib. iii. c. 6.

which lay in their original uncultivated state, having never been grubbed up and cleared. Let any one read the description which Adam of Bremen * gives of Denmark in the eleventh century, and he will be convinced that the coasts alone were peopled, but that the interior parts formed only one vast forest.

From what has been said, therefore, I think one may safely conclude, that as all were soldiers among the ancient Scandinavians, they could easily fill all Europe with the noise of their arms, and ravage for a long time different parts of it, although the sum total of the inhabitants should have been much less than it is at present. If it was otherwise, we must acknowledge, that this extreme population can be very ill reconciled, either with what history informs of the manners, customs and principles of the ancient Scandinavians, or with the soundest notions of policy with respect to what makes the true prosperity of a people. For we cannot allow them such a superiority over us in the number of inhabitants, without granting them at the same time a proportionable excellence in their customs, manners, civil regulations, and constitution of government, as so many efficacious causes of the good or bad state of all societies, and consequently of their greater or less degree of population. But who can persuade himself, that those savage times when men sowed and reaped but little, when they had no other choice but that of the destructive profession

* Adam Brem. hist. eccles. Cap. de situ Danie.

profession of arms, or of a drowsy indolence no less destructive ; when every petty nation was torn to pieces either by private revenge and factions within, or by war with their neighbours from without ; when they had no other subsistence but rapine, and no other ramparts but wide frontiers laid waste ; who, I say, can believe such a state as this to be more favourable to the propagation of the human species, than that wherein mens goods and persons are in full security ; wherein the fields are covered with labourers, and their cities, rich and numerous, flourish in tranquillity ; wherein the people are left to breathe during long intervals of peace, and there is never more than a small part of the inhabitants to whom war is destructive ; and lastly, wherein commerce, manufactures, and the arts offer so many resources, and second so well that natural propensity to increase and multiply, which nothing but the fear of indigence can check and restrain ?

Let us now consider in what manner the ancient nations of the North made war. When an army was upon the march, the whole body, as well generals as private soldiers, equally desired to terminate the campaign by some speedy and decisive action. Their numbers, their poverty, the want of provisions, and of the other precautions observed at present, did not permit these people to wait leisurely the favourable occasions of giving battle. The plunder, as it was their principal object, so it was generally their greatest resource : and they were not of a character to brook
either

either long delays, or severe discipline, without which all military knowledge is useless. Naturally impetuous and ardent, they only fought with courage so long as the first heat of their passion continued, and while they were encouraged by the hope of speedy success. Whenever they attacked a civilized and warlike people, they were always sure to be defeated sooner or later, provided the operations were slow and cautious. It was thus Marius repaired the repeated losses which Rome had suffered from the imprudence of the former generals, by only opposing to the Cimbri a studied slackness which blunted the edge of their impetuosity, and threw them into dejection and decay by reducing them to inaction. One need only read the account which the English historians give of the irruptions made by the Danes in England, to be convinced that it was rather by surprize and sudden excursions than by a regular war, that they made a conquest of that country. The northern kings, as well as those of the other parts of Europe, had not then any regular troops, excepting perhaps a small number of armed cavalry which served them for guards. When they would raise an army, they convoked, as we have said above, a general assembly of the free-men of the nation : in this assembly they levied foldiers, and fixed the number which each farm, village or town was to furnish. There is room to believe, that in Denmark, as in other kingdoms, the foldiers received no regular pay ; but every one returned home as soon as the expedition was finished,

and

and the booty divided. Nevertheless, the more valiant among them, unable to lie inactive, till their own country should offer them new occasions to enrich and signalize themselves, entered into the service of such other nations as were at war. This was a general custom among all the 'Teutonic and' Celtic nations, and ancient history affords us a thousand examples of it. We have seen the Cimbri ask the Romans to assign them lands, promising in return to be always ready to arm themselves in their quarrels. A long time after we frequently see the Goths and Danes in the pay of the Roman emperors. Saxo informs us, that in succeeding ages the emperors of Constantinople intrusted to them the guard of their persons, and gave them the first ranks in their armies*.

It is very difficult to say any thing more particular of the Tactics or military art of these ancient nations. If we may judge of the Scandinavians by what is related of several other Celtic people†, we shall not form

* Vid. Pontoppidani gesta et vestig. Dan. extra Dan. tom. i. p. 20.

† What our author says below of their blind fury, of their disorderly way of fighting, and being readily broken after the first shock, was true of the Gauls, &c. where as the nations of Teutonic race, as they had less vivacity, and were

less choleric, so they seem to have had more constancy and perseverance, and therefore were reducible to better discipline, as our author allows the Scandinavians to have been "when they had skilful generals." This concession the current of history extorted from him contrary to his theory. However, as it is the character of all barbarous



form a very advantageous idea of them in this respect. The Greek and Latin historians represent them to us as mad men, who in battle only followed the instinct of a blind and brutal rage, without regarding either time or place, or circumstances. At the first sight of an enemy, they darted down upon them with the rapidity of lightning: their impetuosity was a mere drunkenness or intoxication, which made them march to battle with the most extravagant joy: but they marched, we are also told, without any order, and often without ever considering whether the enemy could be forced in their post or not. Hence it frequently happened, that their vigour being exhausted, it was sufficient to resist the first shock, and they were defeated. We must nevertheless suppose, that when skilful generals commanded the armies of the Scandinavians, they very well knew how to maintain a proper subordination, and to moderate that senseless fury, which always over-shoots the mark it aims at; at least we see in the accounts which the ancient chronicles give of their battles, that the authority of their generals was very great, and their orders highly respected.

barbarous nations to be eager and furious in their first attacks, we may suppose the ancient Danes and other Gothic nations would not be able to join battle with the same cool and deliberate discipline as a civilized people like the Romans did: and this will account

for what Plutarch and others tell us of the furious ardour of the Cimbri, (in vit. Marii Flor. III 3.) and for whatever similar instances we find in other authors. Vid. Ammian. Marcellin. XVI. 13. p. 146. T.

spected. It appears also to have been their custom to dispose an army in the form of a triangle or pyramid, the point of which was directed against the center of the enemy's army. This body was only composed of infantry ; the cavalry being generally upon a very inconsiderable footing in the North, whether because the country is so divided there by mountains and arms of the sea, or whether because their principal forces were reserved for the marine *. They had only some soldiers who served both on foot and horseback, like our dragoons at present, and who were commonly placed in the flanks of their armies. When they were going to join battle, they raised great shouts, they clashed their arms together, they invoked with a great noise the name of Odin, and sometimes sung hymns in his praise. They made an intrenchment with their baggage round the camp, where the women and children remained during the engagement. The conquered in vain fled there for refuge if they happened to be routed. Most commonly the women only waited their coming back to cut them in pieces, and if they could not oblige them to return to battle, they chose to bury themselves and their children in one common earthenware with their husbands, rather than fall into the hands of a merciless conqueror. Such were the dreadful effects of that inhumanity with which war was then carried on. An act of rigour occasioned an act of cruelty, and this again produced a degree of bar-

VOL. I.

C c

barity

* Dalin. Suga. Rike's hist. tom. i. ch. 8.

barity still greater. The chains and punishments which were reserved for the vanquished, only served to render the victory the more bloody, and to make it cost the dearer to those who purchased the honour of destroying their fellow-creatures without necessity.

Their offensive weapons were commonly the bow and arrows, the battle-axe, and the sword. The sword was short, most frequently crooked in the manner of a scimeter, and hung to a little belt which passed over the right shoulder. Yet they sometimes made use of very long swords which went by a different name*, and these were what the Cimbri employed, according to Plutarch. Their champions or heroes took particular care to procure very keen swords, which they inscribed with mysterious characters, and called by such names as might inspire terror. The battle-axe had two edges; when it had a long handle, it went by the name of an Halberd†, and was particularly affected by the TRABANTS, or those who stood upon guard in the castles of their kings‡. The Scandinavians

* The former went by the name of SWERD, whence our English word SWORD: the latter by that of SPAD or SPADA, a word which is still preserved in most of the southern languages, in the same sense.

† The word HALBERD is, I believe, of later date, though it is of Gothic origin, being compounded of the Teutonic, BARDE an

Axe, and HALLE a Court; Halberds being the common weapons of Guards. (Johnson's Dict. Junii Etymol.) The weapon itself, however, was probably in use from the earliest times. T.

‡ TRABANTS (or rather DĀBANTS) is the name given to the Yeomen of the Guard in the Northern Courts. T.

vians were reckoned very skilful at shooting, and accordingly made great use of the bow, as we learn from all the ancient chronicles. But besides these arms, some warriors employed whatever others they judged most proper to second their valour. Thus we sometimes read of javelins, slings, clubs stuck round with points, lances, and a sort of daggers. There was no less variety in their defensive arms. Of these the shield or buckler was the chief*. This most commonly was of wood, bark, or leather. The shields belonging to warriors of distinction were of iron or brass, ornamented with painting and sculpture, often finely gilt, and sometimes plated over with gold or silver. We have seen what great account the ancient Danes made of their shields, and what penalties were reserved for such as lost them in battle. Their shape and size varied much in different countries: the Scandinavians generally had them of a long oval form, just the height of the bearer, in order to protect him from arrows, darts and stones. They besides made use of them to carry the dead to the grave, to terrify the enemy by clashing their arms against them, to form upon occasion a kind of shelter or tent when they were obliged to encamp in the open field,

or

* They had two sorts of these, smaller kind, or Target, with the great Buckler which rested on the earth, and covered the whole body, called in the Danish language *SKJOLD*, the Shield: and a smaller kind, or Target, with which they parried the thrusts and blows of the sword. See *Danlin. Suc. Rik. hist. tom. i. c. 8. §. 18.*

or when the weather was bad. Nor was the shield less useful in naval encounters; for if the fear of falling into their enemies hands obliged one of their warriors to cast himself into the sea, he could easily escape by swimming upon his buckler*. Lastly, they sometimes made a rampart of their shields, by locking them one into another, in the form of a circle; and at the end of a campaign, they suspended them against the walls of their houses, as the finest decoration with which they could adorn them.

All these uses which they made of their Shields could not but inspire the Scandinavians with a high respect for this part of their armour. It was the most noble manner in which an hero could employ his leisure, to polish his shield to the utmost brightness, and to represent upon it either some gallant feat, or some emblematical figure expressive of his own inclinations or exploits: and this served to distinguish him when, being armed at all points, his helmet hid his face. But then every one could not carry these painted or carved shields indifferently. When a young warrior was at first enlisted, they gave him a white and smooth buckler,

* Vid. Holberg's *Danem. og Norg. Beskrivelse*. chap. xiii.

Plutarch in his *Life of Marius* tells us, that the Cimbri, when they were passing the Alps, took great delight in climbing up to the tops of the mountains over the ice and snow, and there plac-

ing their BROAD SHIELDS under their bodies, would slide down those vast slippery descents.— Travellers inform us, that the same method of descending those snowy slopes is practised to this day. T.

buckler, which was called the "Shield of expectation." This he carried till, by some signal exploit, he had obtained leave to have the proofs of his valour engraven on it: For this reason none but princes, or persons distinguished by their services, presumed to carry shields adorned with any symbol; the common soldiers could not obtain a distinction of which the grandees were so jealous. Even so early as the expedition of the Cimbri, the greatest part of the army, according to Plutarch, had only white bucklers. In following times, but not till long after, these symbols which illustrious warriors had adopted, passing from father to son, produced in the North, as well as all over Europe, hereditary coats of arms.

The casque or helmet was known to the Scandinavians from the most early ages. The private soldiers had their helmets frequently of leather: those of the officers were of iron, and, if their rank or wealth permitted, of gilded brass. The coat of mail, the breast-plate and back-piece, the armour for the thighs, and other less essential pieces, were only for such as were able to procure them. Thus, although the invention of all these was certainly owing to the Scythians and first inhabitants of Europe, few of their descendants were for many ages able to obtain them: a striking proof of their indifference, or rather barbarous contempt for all the arts, since they cultivated so ill even that which was so necessary to them in battle.

They

They did not carry to a much greater degree of perfection the art of fortifying or attacking places of defence. Their fortresses were only rude castles situated on the summits of rocks, and rendered inaccessible by thick mishapen walls. As these walls ran winding round the castles, they often called them by a name which signified SERPENTS or DRAGONS, and in these they commonly secured the women and young maids of distinction, who were seldom safe at a time when so many bold warriors were rambling up and down in search of adventures *. It was this custom which gave occasion to ancient romancers, who knew not how to describe any thing simply, to invent so many fables concerning princesses of great beauty, guarded by dragons, and afterwards delivered by young heroes, who could not atchieve their rescue till they had overcome those terrible guards. These rude forts were seldom taken by the enemy, unless by surprize or after a long blockade: however, when these were of great importance, they raised terraces and artificial banks on that side of the fort which was lowest; and by this means annoyed the besieged by throwing in arrows, stones, boiling water, and melted pitch; offensive arms, which
the

* See Dahm. Suea Rikes. hist. lib. i. ch. 7. §. 20. & tom. i. ch. 6. §. 19. in note.

the besieged, on their part, were not negligent in returning *.

* There is also reason to believe, that the ancient Northern nations were not wholly unacquainted with the use of the Catapulta and other engines for battering, darting stones, &c. but it is very probable that these were not common, and were besides of very rude and simple construction. Vid. Loecken. *Antiq. Suev. Goth.* lib. iii. c. 2. apud Dalin. *Suca. Rik. hist. First Edit.*

CHAP.

CHAPTER X.

Of the Maritime Expeditions of the ancient Danes.

HOW formidable soever the ancient Scandinavians were by land to most of the inhabitants of Europe, it must yet be allowed that their maritime expeditions occasioned still more destructive ravages, and greater terror. We cannot read the history of the eighth, the ninth and tenth centuries, without observing with surprize, the sea covered with their vessels, and from one end of Europe to the other, the coasts of those countries, now the most powerful, a prey to their depredations. During the space of two hundred years, they almost incessantly ravaged England, and frequently subdued it. They often invaded Scotland

Scotland and Ireland, and made incursions on the coasts of Livonia, Courland and Pomerania. Already feared, before the time of Charlemagne, they became still more terrible as soon as this great monarch's eyes were closed. He is known to have shed tears on hearing that these barbarians had, on some occasion, defied his name, and all the precautions he had taken to oppose them. He foresaw what his people would suffer from their courage under his feeble successors. And never was presage better grounded. They soon spread, like a devouring flame, over Lower Saxony, Friesland, Holland, Flanders and the banks of the Rhine as far as Mentz. They penetrated into the heart of France, having long before ravaged the coasts; from various parts they found their way up the Somme, the Seine, the Loire, the Garonne and the Rhone. Within the space of thirty years, they frequently pillaged and burnt Paris, Amiens, Orleans, Poitiers, Bourdeaux, Toulouse, Saintes, Angouleme, Nants, and Tours. They settled themselves in Camargue, at the mouth of the Rhone, from whence they wasted Provence and Dauphiny as far as Valence. In short, they ruined France*, levied immense tribute on its monarchs, burnt the palace of Charlemagne at Aix-la-Chapelle, and, in conclusion, caused one of the finest provinces of the kingdom to

VOL. I.

D d

be

* See in the Collection of Norman Historians, compiled by Duchene, the relation of an ancient anonymous Author; See also that of Dudon de St. Quentin, and other ancient writers.

be ceded to them. They often carried their arms into Spain, and even made themselves dreaded in Italy and Greece. In fine, they no less infested the North than the South with their incursions, spreading every where desolation and terror: sometimes as furiously bent on their own mutual destruction, as on the ruin of other nations; sometimes animated by a more pacific spirit, they transported colonies to unknown or uninhabited countries, as if they were willing to repair in one place the horrid destruction of the human kind occasioned by their furious ravages in others.

A people, who are ignorant of manual arts and traffic, of justice, and of all means of providing for their own security or subsistence except by war, never fail to betake themselves to piracy, if they inhabit a country surrounded by the sea. The Pelasgi or first Greeks were generally pirates and robbers. "Some of them," says Thucidides*, "attacked unfortified cities; others, such as the Carians and Cretans, who dwelt along the coasts, fitted out fleets to scour the seas." But whereas the Greeks are represented to us as pirates in the first periods of their history, it is to be observed, that the Scandinavians did not become so till late. Sidonius Apollinarius, a writer of the fifth century, is, I think, the first who mentions the piracy of the Northern nations. He attributes this practice to the Saxons, of whom he draws

* See Thucid. lib. i. cap. 5.

draws a frightful picture *. The Danes and Norwegians had not as yet ventured far from their coasts, I imagine that their nearest neighbours had not allurements sufficient to tempt them. The inhabitants of those countries, as poor and warlike as themselves, were likely to return them blow for blow. Britain and Gaul were too distant, and too well defended to become the first attempt of the Scandinavian ravagers. They began then by arming a few vessels, with which they plundered the states nearest to them, and overpowered such few merchant-ships as traversed the Baltic. Insensibly enriched by their success in little enterprizes, and encouraged to attempt greater, they were at length in a condition to become formidable to distant nations, such as the Anglo-Saxons, the French, or the Flemings, who all of them possessed wealth enough to tempt free-booters, and lived under a government too defective and weak to repel them. From that time all this people conceived an amazing fondness for maritime expeditions, and towards the beginning of the ninth century, we find these adventurers vastly increased, who, by a strange association of ideas, imagined they acquired eternal glory, by committing every where, without any pretext, the most horrible violence.

In

* *Est Saxonibus piratis cum dis-* *ditur, prævius elabitur, spernit ob-*
criminibus pelagi non notitia solum *jectos, sternit incautos.* Sidon. Apo-
sed familiaritas. . . . Hostis omni *lin. lib. viii. epist. 6.*
hoste truculentior ; improvisus aggre-

In proportion as the divisions, incapacity and imprudence of Charlemagne's successors weakened their governments, the Scandinavians, encouraged by their growing wealth, constantly fitted out still more numerous fleets. "The French monarchy," says an author of that age*, "labouring under the weight of a bad interior policy, hath been obliged to leave the seas exposed to the barbarous fury of the Normans." The mal-administration of the Saxon kings of England produced the same effect in that island, now so respectable for its naval power. Both the one and the other had the dangerous imprudence to purchase peace from these pirates; which was not only putting arms into the hands of the enemy, but was also attended with this further inconvenience, that the commanders in these expeditions, who had no authority over each other, only considered themselves as bound by their own separate engagements; so that those harassed nations were no sooner freed, by dint of money, from one set of ravagers, than another

* Auſtor Vitæ Sti. Genulfi, lib. xi. —

The Scandinavians had already, before the time of Charlemagne, found their way into the neighbouring seas: but this prince having had the precaution to station ships of war at the mouths of all the great rivers throughout his empire, and to cause an exact dis-

cipline to be observed along the coasts, they were obliged to keep within the limits he prescribed them so long as he reigned, which was from A. D. 768, to 814. But they quickly found under his feeble successors that they might scour the seas with the same impunity, they had done before his time. *First Edit.*

her succeeded, ready to attack them with the same impetuosity, if they were not appeased by the same means. The better to account for that strange facility with which the Scandinavians so long plundered, and so frequently conquered the Anglo-Saxons and the French, we must remark, that their cruelty, which gave no quarter, and which occasioned those sad lamentations so well known *, had impressed these nations with such terror, that they were half vanquished at their very appearance. Besides, there was no contending with an enemy who did not make war, like regular forces, on any direct and consistent plan, but by sudden eruptions in a hundred places at once, as expeditions in retreating to their ships where they met with resistance, as in darting down upon the coasts where they found them quiet and defenceless. It is, nevertheless, probable, that a wise and well-ordered government might have remedied all these evils: and in fact that it did so, we have an incontestible proof in the conduct of the great ALFRED, under whose reign the Danes were obliged to leave England unmolested. But what appears an easy matter to us, at this time, required in those ages of ignorance and confusion,

* The Monks inserted it as a petition in the Litany, *A furore Normannorum, libera nos, Domine.*—The French called these adventurers in general NORMANS, i. e. Northern-men: which afterwards became the proper name of the colony that settled in Neustria; whose history is given below. T.

confusion, the uncommon genius of an Alfred to accomplish.

If we reflect on the interior state of Scandinavia, during the times that its inhabitants were so unfortunately famous, we shall soon see the cause of that amazing exterior power which they possessed. I have before observed, that they neglected agriculture, which, among a thousand other good effects, extinguishes in a rising people the relish for savage life, and inspires them with the love of peace and justice, without which the cultivation of their lands is useless. Their flocks being almost their only subsistence, they were neither obliged to a constant abode on the same spot, nor to wait for the time of harvest, and consequently such a people, though in fact but few, were able, on short notice, to levy numerous armies. Most of them brought up in a maritime country, and inured to the sea from their childhood, had no fear of the dangers, or rather knew not that there were dangers of any kind attending such a life. What a boundless field for conquests was here opened by the sole advantage of navigation ! What a free scope was here afforded a warlike people to spread universally the terror of their arms ! The profession of piracy was so far from appearing disgraceful to them, that it was in their eyes the certain road to honours and to fortune : for it was wisely contrived that the word *HONOUR*, to which so many different ideas are annexed, was among them solely confined to a disregard of dangers. Hence it is, that in the ancient chronicles, more than
one

one hero boasts of being the most renowned pirate in the North; and that often the sons of the great lords and kings made cruizing voyages in their youth, in order to render themselves illustrious, and to become one day worthy of command. This is what we see happen very frequently after Harold Harfagre had once made himself master of all Norway, which before his time was divided into several petty kingdoms. Many princes, dukes or earls, seeing themselves thus stripped of their possessions, retired into Iceland, the Orkneys, the isles of Faro and Shetland, and thence covering the sea with their vessels, infested all the coasts of Scandinavia; where for many ages there was no sailing with any safety. Adam of Bremen, who travelled through Denmark some time after Christianity was received there, gives a very affecting description of the desolations they made in that kingdom*. Nor were they in reality less formidable in the North, than to France or England. The coasts of Denmark, Sweden and Norway were obliged to be under constant guard. They encreased so much, that on some occasions, and particularly under king Regner Lodbrog, the Danes were perhaps more numerous on sea than on land: so that the whole nation, according to the account of an ancient historian, wore nothing but the habits of sailors, that they might be ready to embark on the first signal†.

As

* Vid. Adam Brem. de situ Dan. passim.

† Arnold. Lubeck. Chronic.

As soon as a prince had attained his eighteenth or twentieth year, he commonly requested of his father a small fleet completely fitted out, in order to achieve with his followers some adventure that might be productive of glory and spoil. The father applauded such an inclination in his son, as indicating a rising courage and heroic mind. He gave him ships, the commander and crew of which mutually engaged not to return, unless adorned with laurels, and loaded with plunder. That nation became the first object of their resentment, from whom they had received any injury; and frequently their principal aim was to make reprisals on some province which served for the retreat of other corsairs. If the fleets of two different nations met by chance in their voyage, this was also an occasion of fighting which they never neglected.

The vanquished party was commonly put to death, though sometimes the conquerors were contented to make them slaves; and often, by a singular strain of generosity, which the love of glory was able to produce in minds in other respects so ferocious, if the enemy that fell in their way had fewer ships than themselves, they set aside part of their own vessels, that so, engaging upon equal terms, the victory might not be attributed to superiority of numbers*. Many of them also regarded it as dishonourable to surprize the

* So it happened in an engagement between two heroes, who are mentioned in an old Icelandic chronicle called *Torstein Wiking's Saga*.

the enemy by night. Sometimes the chiefs thought it best to decide the dispute by single combat ; in this case they landed on the nearest shore : if one of them happened to be disarmed or thrown down, he frequently refused to receive quarter, and was killed on the spot : but if he had defended himself gallantly, the victor granted him his life, demanded his friendship, adopted him for a kind of Foster-brother *, and they mutually swore to preserve an eternal friendship. In token of this alliance, the two heroes made incisions in their hands or arms, and besmeared their weapons with the blood, or mixing it in a cup, each of them covering their heads with a sod, drank of it, swearing that the death of the first of them who fell in battle should not pass unrevenge. Many of these piratical princes, whom success and custom had attached and habituated to this profession, never quitted it, but gloried in passing the remainder of their lives on board their ships. We meet with them sometimes, in their ancient histories, boasting that they never reposed under an immoveable roof, nor drank BEER in peace by their fire-side †.

The vessels of these corsairs were always well provided with offensive arms, such as stones, arrows, cables, with which they overset small vessels, and grappling irons to board them, &c. Every individual was skilful in swimming ; and as their engagements were

VOL. I.

E e

feldom

* Foster-Broder, *Danish*.

† *Dan. Suc. Rik. hist. tom. i. c. 4. §. 8.*

seldom far distant from the shore, the vanquished party often saved themselves by swimming to land. Each band had its own peculiar stations, ports, places of rendezvous, and magazines: and many cities in the North owe their present prosperity to the advantage they had of affording them retreats. Such was Lunden in Scania, which, according to Adam of Bremen*, contained great riches laid up there by the pirates: and for a long time the kings themselves countenanced and shared their plunder, by selling them the liberty of retiring into their harbours.

The manner in which the lands were parcelled out in Denmark and Norway evidently shews, that every thing there was directed towards this one end of having a powerful maritime force. Each division, whether more or less considerable, derived its name from the number of vessels it was capable of fitting out, and these names still subsist in some places. In the history of Denmark may be seen the particular taxes imposed on each province for that purpose, and the number of ships of which their fleets were composed. At first they were inconsiderable; but in proportion as the chiefs who followed this piratical profession were enriched by it, the northern seas were seen covered with one or two hundred vessels or still more numerous squadrons. We read in history of a fleet of seven hundred ships, commanded by HAROLD BLAATRAND king of Denmark, and a Norwegian lord named

* Vid. Adam Brem. de sit. Dan. cap. ccxiii.

ed Count HAGON. This number is no greater than what we often find in the fleets under the following reigns; and besides it is certain, that the vessels of which it consisted, were but small. The first we hear of were only a kind of twelve-oared barks; they were afterwards built capable of containing one hundred or a hundred and twenty men, and these were very common in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The northern kings also sometimes constructed vessels of an extraordinary size, but these were rather for shew than defence. Such was that of Harold Harefagre: a long ship which the chronicles mention with admiration, under the name of the DRAGON. King Olave Tryggveson had one of the same kind, named the LONG SERPENT: the chronicles say it was very long, large and high, and of a most durable construction; a wooden serpent was carved on its poop, and both that and its prow were gilded. It carried thirty-four banks of rowers, and was, they add, the finest and largest ship that had been ever seen in Norway*.

These piratical expeditions were not always confined to the devastation of some province, or to a few naval engagements; events which producing no farther consequence than the immediate misfortune of the

* See a Dissertation of Baron Holberg's, inserted in the 3d tome of *Memoirs of the Society of Sciences in Denmark*, intitled "Danmark's og Norges Soc Histoire:" See also Torfæus's hist. of Norway in the *Life of HAROLD and of OLAVE, &c. First Edit.*

the people who then suffered by them, were soon forgotten by posterity. I should digress from the purpose of this introduction, were I to relate all the conquests made by the inhabitants of the North in their cruising voyages. I will only take notice of the emigration of the ANGLES, who along with the SAXONS, invaded Britain in the fifth century, and gave it their name. As for the rest, I shall only borrow from the old chronicles some facts and relations little known to strangers, but which will afford the best idea of the maritime power of these ancient Scandinavians, formerly dreaded by so many nations.

It is well known, that the Britons, unable to defend themselves from the northern inhabitants of their isle, sought for assistance from the Danes and Saxons, their allies. The ancient Saxon chronicle, published by Gibson *, informs us, that those people who went over and settled in Britain, were originally of three different countries. One party of them were the ancient SAXONS, that is to say, the people of Lower Saxony ; another were the ANGLES or English, who inhabited that part of the Duchy of Sleswic in the neighbourhood of Flensbourg, still called Angelen, and were consequently Danes. Lastly, there passed over into Britain also a considerable number of JUTES, which is the name given at this day to the inhabitants of Jutland. The Saxons occupied the provinces
named

* Chronic. Saxon. p. 12. et seq.

named, after them, **ESSEX**, **WESTSEX***, **SUSSEX**, and **MIDDLESEX**. "The **ANGLES**," continues the author of that chronicle, "left their own country totally deserted †, and so it still continues. This country" is situated between Saxony and Jutland. Their leaders were Hengist and Horsa, who deduced their pedigree from Odis, as do all our kings. From the Angles descended all the inhabitants of the east and southern parts of England, as well as those of
Mercia

* **WESTSEX**, or the West-Saxon kingdom contained Hampshire, Berks, Wilts, Somerset, Dorset, &c. T.

† We shall not wonder at this, if we recollect that they did not so much conquer the **BRITONS**, as extirpate and expel them, and that they entirely new-peopled three-fourths of this large island. That the Saxons suffered few or none of the old inhabitants to remain among them, appears from their adopting scarce any of their customs, laws, or language: hardly retaining so much as their names of places. All which they would insensibly have done more or less had the conquered Britons remained among them, though in the lowest state of servitude. For it is always seen that the conque-

rors gradually assume the language and manners of the conquered, where the latter are most numerous, though never so much depressed, provided they intermix with them. Thus the Norwegians, under **ROLLO**, when they had conquered Normandy, quickly imbibed the French manners and language: Thus the same Normans, when about two centuries after they conquered England, in vain endeavoured to make their Norman-French the national language, and to establish the Norman laws; in the course of one or two reigns, the laws, manners, and speech of the English had gradually recovered the superiority, and were adopted by the conquerors themselves and their descendants.
 T.

" Mercia * and Northumberland. The Jutes or Jut-landers possessed only Kent and the isle of Wight." Thus although this people were not yet known by the name of Danes, it is evident, that at least two thirds of the conquerors of Great Britain came from Denmark: so that when the Danes again infested England about three or four hundred years after, and finally conquered it toward the latter end of the tenth century, they waged war with the descendants of their own ancestors.

A particular event served to rekindle that spirit of rapine and conquest which had already been so fatal to this island. Harold Harfagre having (as I said above) compleated the conquest of Norway about the year 870, and being desirous of procuring that repose for such of his subjects as dwelt along the coasts, which they themselves would not grant to their neighbours, prohibited all pirates of Norway, under the severest penalties, from exercising any hostilities against their own country †. But notwithstanding this prohibition, a Norwegian Duke ‡, named ROLF or ROLLO, sprung, as it is said, from the ancient kings of Norway,

* MERCIA, or (as the old English name was) MERCH-LAND contained 17 counties, viz. Oxford, Gloucester, Salop, Cheshire, &c. It was called Merch-land, because it was every way bounded by MARCHES, or lands bordering on other kingdoms: It no where

verged on the sea. T.

† Torfæi hist. Norveg. tom. II. lib. II. Ejusd. Dissertat. de Gaungo Rolfo. p. 80.

‡ Called in their own language JARL, a title of the same original and import, as our Anglo-Saxon EARL. T.

Norway, made a descent on the province of Viken, nor retired thence till laden with a great booty of cattle. Harold, who was in the neighbourhood, was enraged at Rollo to the last degree, for thus daring to disobey him almost in his very presence, and instantly condemned him to perpetual banishment from Norway. In vain the mother of this unfortunate youth threw herself at the king's feet, imploring pardon for her son, and chanting, according to the custom of those times, these verses, which the chronicles have preserved to us: "Is the very name of our race become hateful to you? You drive from his country one of the greatest men it has ever produced, the honour of the Norwegian nobility. Ah! why will you provoke the wolf to devour the flocks, who wander defenceless through the woods? Fear, lest becoming outrageous, he should one day occasion great misfortunes." The king remained inflexible, and Rollo perceiving that he was for ever cut off from all hopes of return to his own country, retired with his fleet among the islands of the Hebrides to the north-west of Scotland, whither the flower of the Norwegian nobility had fled for refuge ever since Harold had become master of the whole kingdom. He was there received with open arms by those warriors, who, eager for conquest and revenge, waited only for a chief to undertake some glorious enterprize. Rollo setting himself at their head, and seeing his power formidable, sailed towards England, which had been long as it were a field open on all sides to the violence

ces of the northern nations. But the great Alfred had some years before established such order in his part of the island, that Rollo, after several fruitless attempts, despaired of forming there such a settlement as should make him amends for the loss of his own country. He pretended therefore to have had a supernatural dream, which promised him a glorious fortune in France, and which served at least to support the ardour of his followers. The weakness of the government in that kingdom, and the confusion in which it was involved, were still more persuasive reasons to assure them of success. Having therefore sailed up the Seine to Rouen, he immediately took that capital of the province, then called NEUSTRIA, and making it his magazine of arms, he advanced up to Paris, to which he laid siege in form. The events of this war properly belong to the history of France, and all the world knows, that it at length ended in the entire cession of Neustria, which Charles the Simple was obliged to give up to Rollo and his Normans, in order to purchase a peace. Rollo received it in perpetuity to himself and his posterity, as a feudal duchy dependant on the crown of France *. A description of

* This famous treaty was concluded at S. Clair, A. D. 912, by which K. Charles agreed to give his daughter Gisele in marriage to Rollo, together with that part of Neustria, since called Normandy, upon condition that he would do homage for it, and would embrace the Christian religion. (Vid. *Abregé Chronologique de l'hist de France, par M. Henault.*) T.

of the interview between Charles and this new duke, gives us a curious picture of the manners of these NORMANS, (as they were called by foreigners :) for the latter would not take the oath of fealty to his sovereign lord, any other way than by placing his hands within those of the king; and absolutely refused to kiss his feet, as custom then required. It was with great difficulty he was prevailed on to let one of his warriors perform this ceremony in his stead; but the officer to whom Rollo deputed this service, suddenly raised the king's foot so high, that he overturned him on his back; a piece of rudeness which was only laughed at; to such a degree were the Normans feared, and Charles despised *.

Soon after, Rollo was persuaded to embrace Christianity, and he was baptized with much ceremony by the archbishop of Ruen in the cathedral of that city. As soon as he saw himself in full possession of Normandy, he exhibited such virtues as rendered the province happy, and deserved to make his former outrages forgotten. Religious, wise, and liberal, this captain of pirates became, after Alfred, the greatest and most humane prince of his time. Far from treating Normandy as a conquered province, his whole attention was employed to re-establish it. This country was, by the frequent devastations of the Scandinavians, rendered so desert and uncultivated, that Rollo could not at first reside in it; but Charles was

VOL. I.

F f

obliged

* Wilhelm. Gemmet. lib. ii. c. 11.

obliged to yield up Brittany to him for a while, till Normandy was in a condition to furnish subsistence to its new masters. Nevertheless, the fertility of the soil, seconding the industry of the people, it became, in a few years, one of the finest provinces of Europe. Thus it was that this prince, afterwards known under the name of **ROLLO** or **RAOUL I.** secured to his children this noble possession, which they, two hundred years afterwards, augmented by the conquest of England: as if it were destined that this island should at all times receive its sovereigns from among the northern nations. As to the French historians, they agree with the Icelandic chronicles, in describing Rollo as a man of uncommon wisdom and capacity; generous, eloquent, indefatigable, intrepid, of a noble figure, and majestic size. Many other Scandinavian princes and captains are drawn in the same colours. Such were Harold Harfagre, Olave Tryggveson, Magnus king of Norway, Canute the Great, &c. men born with truly heroic qualities, which they alas! degraded by injustice and inhumanity: but who wanted only another age and another education to render them most accomplished persons.

CHAPTER XI.

Sequel of the maritime expeditions of the ancient Danes and Norwegians. The Discovery of Iceland and Greenland, and of an unknown country, called Vinland.

IT was not by this expedition alone, important as it might be, that the Norwegians were distinguished under the reign of HAROLD HARFAGRE. The ambition of that prince gave birth to a conquest of a more peaceable kind, which though little known to the rest of the world, had yet very interesting consequences in the history of the North. For, not satisfied with having happily subdued the little tyrants who had for a long time weakened and distressed Norway,

way, he was disposed to exercise such absolute authority over his subjects, as, far from submitting to, they had not even a name for it. The greatest part of the Norwegian nobility perceiving that it was in vain to oppose their strength to his, determined to abandon a country, where they were obliged to live depressed, impoverished and obscure. Ingulph was one of the first who went into this voluntary exile. It is, indeed, said, that the apprehension of being punished for a murder he had committed, was, equally with the tyranny of Harold, a motive for his flight; but this latter inducement was certainly what engaged a multitude of noble families of Norway to join him*. These illustrious fugitives being embarked, Ingulph, whom they had chosen for their leader, conducted them; in the year 874, to Iceland, which must certainly have been long before known to a people who were such expert sailors, though they had never yet thought of sending colonies thither. As soon as they discovered it at a distance, Ingulph, according to an ancient and superstitious custom, threw a wooden door into the sea, determining to land where the Gods should seem to point out, by the direction of this floating guide; but the waves carrying it out of sight, after a fruitless search, they were obliged to disembark in a gulph toward the south part of the island, which still bears Ingulph's name. Hiorleif, his brother-in-law settled in another part. They both found
the

* Arngrim. Jon. Crymogæa, five de reb. Island. lib. iii. Hamb. 1593.

the island uninhabited and uncultivated, but covered with thick forests of birch-trees, through which they could not penetrate, but by cutting their way before them. There are now no forests in Iceland, nor any birch-trees, except here and there a few short and slender shrubs: but the trees that are still found deep buried in the earth, and frequently among the rocks, should prevent our too hastily rejecting the evidence of the ancient chronicles, when they describe the country as different from what it is at present *. The Norwegian adventurers imagined that this island had been formerly inhabited, or at least that people had landed on the shore, as Ingulph found there wooden crosses, and other little pieces of workmanship, after the manner of the Irish and Britons. These people had embraced Christianity before that time, and very possibly some of their fishermen thrown upon the coasts, might have left a few of their effects behind them. On this supposition, that Iceland had not been inhabited

* Vid. ARNGRIM. JON. Crymogæa. lib. i. c. 2. p. 21.—TORFAEUS remarks the same thing. "Should any one object, (says he) that modern Iceland does not answer the ancient descriptions of it, it may be justly answered, that this country has greatly degenerated. This I can affirm, from what I have been an eye-witness of myself: I have seen in my youth great alterations in the face of this country; shores swallowed, and others thrown up by the violence of the waves; meadows formerly fruitful, now buried under vast heaps of sand; plains all covered, and vallies filled up with stones and sand brought down by the torrents of melted snow," &c. Vide Torfæi hist. Norveg. tom. i. c. 5. p. 12.

inhabited before the ninth century, it could not possibly be the *THULE* of which the ancients speak so often; and what Procopius and others have written of it, seems rather applicable to the northern provinces of Scandinavia*.

The success of Ingulph's expedition being much talked of in Norway, other families were eager to fly to this place of refuge from the ambitious encroachments of their king. The Icelandic annals are very exact in relating the names of these adventurers, the several numbers of which they consisted, together with the names of the places where they settled; which, for the most part, are still retained. All the other circumstances of these voyages are handed down with equal precision, and we may confidently assert, that the ancient history of Iceland is more complete than that of any other country in Europe. The several particulars, and the sequel of the event are foreign to this work; we need only observe, that this Icelandic colony carried with them a violent hatred for arbitrary power, and bravely preserved their liberty and independence against every attempt to deprive them of those blessings. This was endeavoured
by

* All that can, with any certainty, be said of this *Ultima Thule* of the ancients, is, that they called by that name the farthest country which they could discover to the North; or in general some very

northern country. Indeed it appears, that they applied this name at different times to the isles of Shetland, Faro, the Orkneys, Norway, Iceland, Lapland, &c.

by several Norwegian princes in vain; so that it was full four hundred years before this republic became subject to Norway, along with which it was afterwards united to the crown of Denmark.

About a century after the discovery of Iceland, a Norwegian nobleman, called TORWALD, having been exiled for killing a person in a duel, retired thither, along with his son ERIC, surnamed RUFUS, or the RED*. Torwald dying there, his son was soon after, for a similar accident, obliged to withdraw from this island. Not knowing where to fly for refuge, necessity determined him to attempt the discovery of a coast, to the north of Iceland, which had been before described by a Norwegian voyager. His search proved successful, and he landed there in the year 982. He settled at first on a little island that formed a strait, which he called, after his own name, ERIC-SUND, and there passed the winter. In the spring he went to survey the main-land, and finding it covered with a pleasing verdure, gave it the name it still bears, of GROENLAND or GREENLAND†. After living there some

* Vid. Torfæi *Greenland. Antiq. descript.* Haun. 1708.

† GROENLAND is, in the northern languages, exactly equivalent to our English word GREENLAND. An old Icelandic historian tells us, that ERIC gave the country this alluring name, in order to capti-

vate and invite the northern people to come and settle there. (*Vid. Arii Polyhist. libellus de Islandia, c. 6. p. 33.*) The name, however, was not altogether without foundation; for though Greenland is in the inner parts a high mountainous country, covered perpetually

some years, he returned to Iceland, and prevailed on several persons to go and settle in this new country. He described it as a land abounding in excellent pasturage, in furs and game, having a coast well supplied with fish. Returning back with his Icelanders, he applied himself to render this infant colony flourishing and prosperous.

Some years after, LEIF, the son of ERIC, having made a voyage to Norway, met with a favourable reception from king Olave Tryggveson, to whom he painted out Greenland in the most advantageous colours. Olave, newly become a convert to Christianity, was animated with the warmest zeal to propagate through the North the religion he had embraced. He detained Leif therefore at his court during the winter, and was so good an advocate for the Christian doctrines, that he persuaded his guest to be baptized. In the spring he sent him to Greenland, attended by a priest, who was to confirm him in his faith, and endeavour to get it received into the new colony. Eric was at first offended at his son's deserting the religion of his ancestors, but was at length appeased; and the missionary, with the assistance of Leif, soon brought over the whole settlement to the knowledge of the true

ally with ice and snow; yet on the sea-coasts, and in the bays and inlets are found very good meadows and pastures; or at least what might be deemed such by natives of Iceland and Norway. See FORSTER's Natural History of Greenland. Lond. 1745. p. 4, 12, 44, &c. T.

true God. Before the end of the tenth century, there were churches in Greenland, and a bishoprick had been erected in the new town of GARDE, the capital of the country, whither the Norwegians traded for many years. The Greenlanders soon after encreasing, founded another little town called ALSE, and a monastery dedicated to St. Thomas. Arngrim Jonas has preserved a list of the bishops of Garde : they were suffragans to the archbishop of Drontheim. The Greenlanders acknowledged the kings of Norway for their sovereigns, and paid them an annual tribute, from which they in vain endeavoured to free themselves in the year 1261. This colony subsisted till about the year 1348, which was the æra of a dreadful pestilence, known by the name of the BLACK DEATH, that made terrible devastation in the North. From that time *, both the colony at Garde and that

VOL. I.

G g

at

* Though the pestilence above-mentioned might contribute to the ruin of the colony, and to cut off its intercourse with Norway ; yet EGEDE assures us, that it still subsisted and maintained some correspondence with the mother-country until the year 1406, when the last bishop was sent over to Greenland. The same author attributes the neglect and loss of that ancient colony to the disturbances in the North, occasioned partly by

change and translation of the government in queen Margaret's reign (about the beginning of the 15th century) and partly by the continual wars, that followed between the Swedes and Danes, which caused the navigation to those parts to be laid aside : to which a natural cause has also probably contributed, viz. that the seas on the eastern coast, which were formerly open, are now closed up with almost perpetual shoals

of

at Albe, with all the other Norwegian settlements on the eastern coast of Greenland, having been so totally forgotten and neglected, that we are utterly ignorant what became of them. All the endeavours which have been used since, have only tended to the discovery of the western shore, where in the present age the Danes have made four new settlements. The Icelandic chronicles unanimously attest, that the ancient Norwegians established a colony also on the western coast; but as no remains of it are now extant, many people suspected the veracity of those historians on this head, and consequently on many others. At length they have recovered all the authority they were in danger of losing. It is not long since the Danish missionaries discovered along this coast the ruins of large stone houses, of churches built in the form of a cross, and fragments of broken bells; they have also discovered that the savage inhabitants of the country have preserved a distinct remembrance of those ancient Norwegians, of the places where they dwelt, their customs, the quarrels their ancestors had with them, and of the war which ended in the destruction of those strangers *.

We

of ice, so as to render it inaccessible. EGEDZ, however, offers proofs that the old colony is not wholly extinct, and even proposes means of getting to them. See his Hist. of Greenland, chap. ii. &c. T.

Greenland, p. 6. and particularly the whole 2d chapter.—The same author tells us, that in the language of the native Greenlanders are found at this day many Norwegian words. See ch. xvii. p.

* See EGEDZ's description of 163.

We ought not, after this, to doubt what the same chronicles tell us concerning other colonies, founded at the same time, and particularly those in the eastern part of Greenland. The discovery of such an ancient settlement cannot fail of being a just object of curiosity. It is true indeed, that several unsuccessful attempts were made towards it in the last age; but were they so well directed, as to bar all future hopes? The most intelligent persons are of opinion, that they were not. We may therefore expect that an attentive government will ere long surmount all the obstacles which have hitherto opposed so interesting a discovery.

The Scandinavians, now masters of the northern ocean, and flushed with success, became possessed, at different times, of all the islands in those seas. Thus, while the Danes were reducing England, the Norwegians conquered a considerable part of Scotland, and peopled the Orkneys, the Hebrides, the islands of Faro and Shetland; in most of which the Norwegian language is spoken to this day. Towards the end of the eleventh century, Magnus, the son of Olave, one of their princes, filled that part of the world with the renown of his arms. Ordericus Vitalis, whose acknowledged veracity in the histories of France and England, may serve to establish that of our old Icelandic chronicles, with which he perfectly agrees, relates, that “ in the fifth year of the reign of William Rufus, king of England *, Magnus king of Norway
“ visited

* This was in the year 1092. Vid. Orderic. Vital. Hist. eccles. lib. x.

“ visited the Orkneys, and made a tour through part
 “ of Scotland, and all the islands in those seas that be-
 “ longed to him, as far as Anglesey. He settled co-
 “ lonies in the Isle of Man, which was then a desert,
 “ commanded them to build houses, and took care
 “ they should be provided with necessaries of every
 “ kind. He afterwards made a progress through se-
 “ veral other islands in the great ocean, which are,
 “ in a manner, beyond the limits of the world; and,
 “ exerting his royal authority, obliged several people
 “ to go and inhabit them. With the same earnest-
 “ ness did this prince apply himself for many years to
 “ increase his subjects, and enlarge his empire.” But
 if in an age when ignorance overspread the whole face
 of Europe; when the aim of governments was little
 more than self-defence; and when rapine and blood-
 shed composed the most memorable events of history;
 if we are surprized to find, in such an age, colonies
 founded, and unknown regions explored, by a people
 who are considered as farther removed than other na-
 tions from civility and science; how will our surprize
 be increased when we find them opening a way into
 that new world, which many ages after occasioned
 such a change among us, and reflected so much glory
 on its discoverers. Strange as this may appear, the
 fact becomes indisputable, when we consider that the
 best authenticated Icelandic chronicles unanimously
 affirm it, that their relations contain nothing that can
 admit of doubt, and that they are supported by seve-
 ral concurrent testimonies. This is an event too in-
 teresting

interesting, and too little known, not to require a circumstantial detail. I shall proceed then, without any previous reflections, to relate the principal circumstances, as I find them in the Treatise of Ancient Vinland, written by Torfæus; and in the history of Greenland by Jonas Arngrim: two Icelandic authors of undoubted credit, who have faithfully copied the old historians of their own country*.

There was, say those ancient chronicles, an Icelander, named HRIOL, who along with his son BIARN, made every year a trading voyage to different countries, and generally wintered in Norway. Happening one time to be separated from each other, the son steered his course for Norway, where he supposed he should meet with his father; but on his arrival there, found he was gone to Greenland, a country but lately discovered, and little known to the Norwegians. Biarn determined, at all events, to follow his father, and set sail for Greenland; although, says Arngrim,

“ he

* This little treatise of Torfæus appeared in the year 1765, under the title of “ *Historia Vinlandie antiquæ, seu pars America Septentrionalis, ubi nominis ratio recensetur, &c. ex antiquit. Islandicis eruta.*” Arngrim’s History of Greenland came out more than one hundred years before, but he only occasionally mentioned this discovery in the 9th and 10th

chapters. The Icelandic manuscripts that speak of it are numerous; the principal are the *Codex Flateyensis*, *Hiemskringla*, *Landnams Saga*, or “Book on the origin of countries;” and possibly others that are now lost, but of which many extracts remain in the collection of a learned Icelander named BJORN DE SKARDZA.

“ he had no-body on board who could direct him in the voyage, nor any particular instructions to guide him ; so great was the courage of the ancients ! He steered by the observation of the stars, and by what he had heard of the situation of the country he was in quest of.” During the first three days, he bore towards the west, but the wind varying to the north, and blowing strong, he was forced to run to the southward. The wind ceasing in about twenty-four hours, they discovered land at a distance, which as they approached they perceived to be flat and low, and covered with wood ; for which reason he would not go on shore, as being convinced it could not be Greenland, which had been represented to him as distinguishable at a great distance for its mountains covered with snow. They then sailed away towards the North-west, and were aware of a road which formed an island, but did not stop there. After some days they arrived in Greenland, where Biarn met with his father.

The following summer, viz. in the year 1002, Biarn made another voyage to Norway, where, to one of the principal lords of the country, named count ERIC, he mentioned the discovery he had made of some unknown islands. The count blamed his want of curiosity, and strongly pressed him to proceed on with his discovery. In consequence of this advice, Biarn, as soon as he was returned to Greenland to his father, began to think seriously of exploring those lands with more attention. LEIF, the son of that same Eric Rufus,

fus who had discovered Greenland, and who was still chief of the colony he had settled there; this Leif, I say, being desirous of rendering himself illustrious like his father, formed the design of going thither himself; and prevailing on his father Eric to accompany him, they fitted out a vessel with five and thirty hands; but when the old man was setting out on horseback to go to the ship, his horse happened to fall down under him; an accident which he considered as an admonition from heaven to desist from the enterprize; and therefore returning home, the less-superstitious Leif set sail without him.

He soon descried one of the coasts which Biarn had before seen, that lay nearest to Greenland. He cast anchor and went on shore, but found only a flat rocky shore without any kind of verdure; he therefore immediately quitted it, after having first given it the name of HELLELAND, or the "Flat Country *." A short navigation brought him to another place, which Biarn had also noted. In this land, which lay very low, they saw nothing but a few scattered thickets, and white sand. This he called MARK-LAND, or the "Level country †." Two days prosperous sailing

* *Pays plat*, says the French original. But HELLELAND should rather be rendered "Stonyland:" for *Hella* signifies a Stone or Rock, in the Northern languages; which our French author seems to have been but slightly acquainted with.

† *Pays du plaine*, says our author.—But MARKLAND rather signifies "Woody-land:" from *Mark* (*sjlva, tesqua*) a Wood, or Rough Thicket. T.

ing brought them to a third shore, which was sheltered to the north by an island. They disembarked there in very fine weather, and found plants which produced a grain as sweet as honey. Leaving this, they sailed westward, in search of some harbour, and at length entering the mouth of a river, were carried up by the tide into a lake whence the stream proceeded.

As soon as they were landed, they pitched their tents on the shore, not yet daring to wander far from it. The river afforded them plenty of very large salmon; the air was soft and temperate; the soil appeared to be fruitful, and the pasturage very good. The days in winter were much longer than in Greenland, and they had less snow than in Iceland *. Entirely satisfied with their new residence, they erected houses, and spent the winter there.

But before the setting in of this season, a German who was of their company, named TYRKEK, was one day

* Arngrim adds, from the ancient chronicles, that their shortest day was six, and their night eighteen hours. But it must be confessed, that nothing can be more uncertain than this reckoning by hours, among a people who had no exact method of computing time. The arguments of Torfæus on this subject make it evident, that the old Icelandic word which we translate Hour, is of a very

vague and undetermined signification; and that the ancient chronicles may be so understood as to give us room to conclude that at the winter solstice the sun rose there at 8 in the morning, and set at 4. This gives us the 49th degree, which is the latitude of Canada and Newfoundland. See the Supplement to Torfæus's Ancient Vinland, &c. *First Edit.*

day missing. Leif, apprehensive for the safety of a man who had been long in his father's family, and was an excellent mechanic, sent his people all about to hunt for him. He was at length found, singing and leaping, and expressing the most extravagant joy by his discourse and gestures. The astonished Greenlanders enquired the reason of such strange behaviour, and it was not without difficulty, owing to the difference of their languages, that Tyrker made them understand he had discovered wild grapes near a place which he pointed out. Excited by this news, they immediately went thither, and brought back several bunches to their commander, who was equally surprised. Leif still doubted whether they were grapes; but the German assured him he was born in a country where vines grew, and that he knew them too well to be mistaken. Yielding to this proof, Leif named the country VINLAND, or the Land of Wine.

Leif returned to Greenland in the spring; but one of his brothers, named THORVALD, thinking he had left the discovery imperfect, obtained from Eric this same vessel and thirty men. Thorvald arriving at Vinland, made use of the houses built by Leif, and living on fish, which was in great plenty, passed the winter there. In the spring he took part of his people, and set out westward to examine the country.— They met every where with very pleasing landscapes, all the coasts covered with forests, and the shores with a black sand. They saw a multitude of little islands divided from each other by small arms of the sea, but

no marks of either wild beasts, or of men, except a heap of wood piled up in the form of a pyramid.— Having spent the summer in this survey, they returned in autumn to their winter quarters; but the summer following, Thoryald being desirous of exploring the eastern and northern coasts, his vessel was a good deal shattered by a storm; and the remainder of that season was taken up in repairing her. He afterwards set up the keel, which was unfit for service, at the extremity of a neck of land, thence called **KIELLARNAES**, or Cape-Keel*. He then proceeded to survey the eastern coasts, where he gave names to several Bays and Capes which he then discovered.

On his landing one day, attracted by the beauty of the shore, he was aware of three little leathern canoes, in each of which were three persons seemingly half-asleep. Thorvald and his companions instantly ran in and seized them all excepting one, who escaped; and by a ferocity as imprudent as it was cruel, put them to death the same day. Soon afterwards, as they lay on the same coast, they were suddenly alarmed by the arrival of a great number of these little vessels, which covered the whole bay. Thorvald gave immediate orders to his party to defend themselves with planks and boards against their darts, which quite filled the air; and the savages having in vain wasted all their arrows, after an hour's combat, betook themselves to a precipitate flight. The Norwegians

* Or as we should express it in English, **KEELNESS**. T.

wegians called them in derision SKRAELINGUES, *i. e.* small and puny men*: the chronicles tell us, that this kind of men are neither endowed with strength nor courage, and that there would be nothing to fear from a whole army of them. Arngrim adds, that these Skrælingues are the same people who inhabit the western parts of Greenland, and that the Norwegians who are settled on those coasts had called the savages they met with there by the same name.

Thorvald was the only one who was mortally wounded, and dying soon after, paid the penalty that was justly due for his inhuman conduct. As he desired to be buried with a cross at his feet, and another at his head, he seems to have imbibed some idea of Christianity, which at that time began to dawn in Norwegian Greenland. His body was interred at the point of the Cape, where he had intended to make a settlement; which Cape was named from the crosses, KROSSA-NAES or KORSNAES†. The season being too far advanced for undertaking the voyage home, the rest of the crew staid the winter there, and did not reach Greenland till the following spring. We are farther told, that they loaded the vessel with vine-fets, and all the raisins they could preserve.

ERIC

* They also called them SMAEL- Sched. p. 33. T.

INGS, which signifies the same thing; SMAEL in Icelandic being equivalent to SMALL in English. Vid. Buffon Not. in Arrii Polyhist.

† Or, according to the English dialect, CROSS-NESS, or CAPE-CROSS. T.

ERIC † had left a third son, named THORSTEIN, who as soon as he was informed of his brother Thorvald's death, embarked that very year with his wife Gudride, and a select crew of twenty men. His principal design was to bring his brother's body back to Greenland, that it might be buried in a country more agreeable to his *manes*, and in a manner more honourable to his family. But during the whole summer the winds proved so contrary and tempestuous, that after several fruitless attempts, he was driven back to a part of Greenland far distant from the colony of his countrymen. Here he was confined during the rigor of the winter, deprived of all assistance, and exposed to the severity of so rude a climate. These misfortunes were increased by a contagious sickness, which carried off Thorstein and most of his company. His widow took care of her husband's body, and returning with it in the spring, interred it in the burial-place of his family.

Hitherto we have seen the Norwegians only making slight efforts to establish themselves in Vinland. The year after Thorstein's death proved more favourable to the design of settling a colony. A rich Ic-lander, named Thorfin, whose genealogy the chronicles have carefully preserved, arrived in Greenland
from

* M. Mallet says, "*Leif avait* line, that THORSTEIN was the
"*laissé un troisième fils nommé Thor-* brother of THORVALD; and he had
"*stein :*" but this is evidently a before called THORVALD the bro-
mistake, for he tells us in the next ther of LEIF. T.

from Norway, with a great number of followers. He cultivated an acquaintance with Leif, who since his father Eric's death was head of the colony; and with his consent espoused Gudride, by whom he acquired a right to those claims her former husband had on the settlements at Vinland. Thither he soon went to take possession, having with him Gudride and five other women, besides sixty sailors, much cattle, provision, and implements of husbandry. Nothing was omitted that could forward an enterprize of this kind. Soon after his arrival on the coast, he caught a great whale, which proved very serviceable to the whole company. The pasturage was found to be so plentiful and rich, that a bull they had carried over with them became in a short time remarkable for its fierceness and strength.

The remainder of that summer, and the winter following were spent in taking all necessary precautions for their preservation, and in procuring all the conveniences of which they had any idea. The succeeding summer the Skrelingues or natives of the country came down in crowds, and brought with them various merchandizes * for traffic. It was observed that the roaring of the bull terrified them to such a degree that they burst open the doors of Thorfin's house, and crowded in with the utmost precipitation. Thorfin suffered his people to traffic with them, but strictly forbade

* The chronicles remark, that these merchandizes consisted chiefly of furs, fables, the skins of white rats, &c.

forbad their supplying them with arms, which were what they seemed most desirous of obtaining. The Greenland women offered them different kinds of eatables made with milk, of which they were so fond, that they came down in crowds to beg them in exchange for their skins. Some disputes that arose obliged the Skrelingues to retire, and Thorfin surrounded the factory with a strong palisade to prevent surprise.

Nothing memorable occurred the next year. The Skrelingues again offered their commodities, and again begged to have arms in exchange. These being always denied, one of them stole an hatchet, and returned highly pleased to his companions. Eager to try the new instrument, he gave a violent blow to one of his comrades, and killed him on the spot. All who were present stood silent with astonishment 'till one whose shape and air bespoke him to be a person of some authority among them, took up the instrument, and after closely examining it, threw it with the utmost indignation as far as he could into the sea.

After staying there three years, Thorfin returned home, with a valuable cargo of raisins and other merchandize; the fame of which spreading through the North, the incitements of curiosity and gain drew several adventurers to Vinland. The author of the chronicle, called the *MANUSCRIPT OF FLATEY*, relates, that after several voyages, Thorfin ended his days in Iceland, where he had built a very fine house, and
lived

lived in splendor as one of the first lords of the country; that he had a son named SNORRO, born in Vinland; that his widow went on a pilgrimage to Rome after his death, and having at her return devoted herself entirely to religion, died in a monastery in Iceland, near a church erected by her son. The same author adds, that this account is confirmed by Thorfin himself, and mentions the facts as well known to all the world. Another manuscript relates the same circumstances only with some inconsiderable variations.

But to return to the new colony, where Thorfin had without doubt left some of his people: two brothers, named HELGUE and FINBOG, Icelanders by birth, going to Greenland, were persuaded to fit out two vessels, and undertake a voyage to this new country. FREIDIS, the daughter of Eric Rufus, accompanied them; but this woman, unworthy to belong to so illustrious a family, imposed upon the two brothers, and during their stay in Vinland, raised such disturbances as ended in the massacre of thirty people. Freidis not daring to stay after this bloody scene, fled to Greenland to her brother Leif, where she spent the residue of her days, hated and despised by all mankind. Helgue and Finbog were among the unfortunate victims, and it is probable that those who escaped settled in the country.

This is the substance of what we find in the ancient Icelandic writers concerning the discovery of VINLAND: and as they only mention it occasionally, this
accounts

accounts for their silence in respect to the sequel, There is reason to suppose, that the people of the North continued to make voyages to Vinland for a long time : but as nothing particular occurred afterwards, historians deemed it sufficient to mention such circumstances as related to its first discovery and settlement. Yet the Icelandic chronicles sometimes speak of Vinland afterwards. There is one of them in particular (which the critics esteem very authentic) that makes express mention of a Saxon priest, named JOHN, who after having served a church in Iceland for the space of four years, passed over to Vinland, with an intention of converting the Norwegian colony ; but we may conclude his attempt did not succeed, since we find he was condemned to death. In the year 1121, ERIC, a bishop of Greenland, went over there on the same errand, but we know not with what success. Since that time Vinland seems by degrees to have been forgotten in the North ; and that part of Greenland which had embraced Christianity being lost, Iceland also fallen from its former state, and the northern nations being wasted by a pestilence, and weakened by internal feuds, all remembrance of that discovery was at length utterly obliterated, and the Norwegian Vinlanders themselves having no further connection with Europe, were either incorporated into, or destroyed by their barbarian neighbours *. Be this as it may, the testimony of
our

* In his first edit. our author was of opinion, that the savages called

Our ancient chronicles is strongly corroborated by the positive testimony of ADAM of BREMEN, a well-esteemed historian, who lived in the very age when the discovery was made. Adam was a virtuous ecclesiastic, who received all he relates from the mouth of SWAIN II. * king of Denmark, who had entertained him during the long abode he made in that kingdom. These are his own words †, “The king of Denmark hath informed me, that another island has been discovered in the ocean, that washes Norway or Finmark, which island is called Vinland, from the vines which grow there spontaneously; and we learn, not by fabulous hearsay, but by the express report of certain Danes, that fruits are produced there without cultivation.” Hence we see, that this was not only admitted as a certain fact in Greenland, Iceland and Norway, but the fame of it was also spread abroad in Denmark ‡; and we may add in England, Normandy, and undoubtedly much further. Ordericus Vitalis, the

Vol. I.

I i

historian

called ESKIMAUX, who inhabit Newfoundland, might possibly be descended from that Norwegian colony, as being distinguished from the other inhabitants of America by their white skins, their fair hair, and bushy beards: but upon reflection he found reason to discard this opinion. T.

* Called by the Danes SUENON ESTRIDSEN. *First Edit.*

† Vid. ADAM BREMEN. de situ

Dan. c. 246.

‡ Rudbek pretends, that in this place ADAM means Finland in Sweden. Among the many bold conjectures of this man, there is not one less defensible than this. Adam of Bremen was well acquainted with Finland, since he expressly names it in that same work. It is needless to confute an opinion so contrary to probability, and devoid of all foundation.

historian of the Normans and English, whom I before mentioned, reckons Vinland along with Greenland, Iceland and the Orkneys, as countries under the dominion of the king of Norway, and whose commerce encreased his revenues *. What Adam of Bremen immediately adds after the foregoing passage, merits likewise some attention, as it indicates the strong propensity of the Norwegians for maritime enterprizes, and (what we should little expect from so unenlightened a people) for expeditions that had even no other end but to make new discoveries. "In advancing farther towards the North," says he, "we meet with nothing but a boundless sea, covered with enormous pieces of ice, and hid in perpetual darkness." (He certainly means those almost continual fogs, so well known to such as frequent the seas of North America.) "Harold, prince of Norway, was lately very near having a fatal proof of this, when being desirous of knowing the extent of the northern ocean, he tried to discover it with several vessels; but the limits of the world being hid from their sight by thick darkness, they were with difficulty preserved from destruction in that vast mass of waters." We see, notwithstanding this figurative manner of speaking, that Harold had formed some great design, concerning which, history leaves us in the dark; and without doubt he was not the only one of his age and nation, whose enterprizes of this kind

* Order. Vital. hist. Eccles. ad. an. 1098.

kind are buried in oblivion. Fame, as well as all other sublunary things, is governed by Chance, and without her assistance, the attempt made by Alfred the Great to discover a north-east passage to the Indies, would have still remained unknown to us *. In all

* In the Cotton Library is happily preserved a Relation of this Voyage, written in the Saxon language by ALFRED himself, as he took it down from the mouth of OETHER, a Norwegian, who had been sent by him into the Northern seas to make discoveries. The narrative, it must be owned, appears to us in this enlightened age but short and superficial: but if we consider the time in which it was written, what must we think of the amazing capacity of that great monarch, who could conceive or encourage such an attempt, and who could condescend to write down with his own hand the result of the enquiry, which probably the Norwegian adventurer was not able to do himself, and which the king might not chuse to trust to the pen of another, who might not have been so exact or curious?

In the same tract the king has also given the report of WULFESTAN, an Anglo-Saxon, whom he had sent to explore the Baltic.

The substance of Oether's account may be seen in Hackluyt's Voyages, and in part in Spelman's Life of Alfred, p. 153. The original was first published with a Latin version, at the end of Walker's Lat. translation of Spelman, and has been reprinted (at the end of Arian Polybist. *S. bade de Islandia ab Andraa Bussæo, Hafn. 1733, 4to.*) under this title, *Periplus OETHERI Halgolandæ-Norvegi, ut et WULFESTANI Angli, secundum narrationes eorum de suis, Unius in ultimam plagam septentrionalem, Utriusque autem in mari Baltico Navigationibus, jussu ÆLFREDI MAGNI Anglorum regis, seculo a nativitate Christi nono factis; ab ipso REGE Anglo-Saxonica lingua descriptus, demum. . . . Latine versus, et una cum* " Joh. " Spelmanni Vita Ælfredi Magni, " ni," è veteri cod. MS. Biblioth. Cotton. editus: Jam vero, ob antiquitatem, et septentrionalis tum temporis statûs cognitionem, repetitus, ac brevibus NOTIS adauctus ab ANDRÆA BUSSÆO. T.

all ages the Europeans seem to have had a wonderful propensity, peculiar to themselves, for great and daring enterprizes. Hence we may foresee, that the glory of pervading the whole globe is reserved for them. And doubtless the time will come, when they will explore and measure the vast countries of Terra Australis, will cruise beneath the Poles, and will securely, and freely in every sense of the expression, SAIL ROUND THE WORLD.

To return to our subject. The discovery of a distant country called Vinland, and the reality of a Norwegian colony's settling there, appear to be facts so well attested on all sides, and related with circumstances so probable, as to leave no room for any doubt. But to settle the geography of the country where this happened, is not an easy matter. To succeed in an enquiry of this kind, we should know what part of America lies nearest to Greenland; by what nations it is inhabited; what are their languages and traditions; as also the customs and produce of their countries; branches of knowledge these, which we shall but very imperfectly learn from the books hitherto published. Nevertheless, though we may not be able to ascertain exactly the situation of Vinland, we have sufficient room to conjecture that this colony could not be far from the coasts of Labrador, or those of Newfoundland, which are not far from it: nor is there any circumstance in the relations of the ancient chronicles, but what may be accounted for on such a supposition.

The

The first difficulty that must be obviated, is the short space of time that appears to have been taken up in passing to this country from Greenland. To this end we must observe, that the Norwegians might set sail from the western, as well as from the eastern coast of that country, since (as hath been said before) they had settled on both sides of it. Now it is certain, that Davis's Streight, which separates Greenland from the American continent, is very narrow in several places ; and it appears from the journal taken by the learned Mr Ellis, in his voyage to Hudson's Bay, that his passage from Cape Farewell, which is the most southern point of Greenland, into the entrance of the Bay, was but seven or eight days easy sail with a wind indifferently favourable. The distance between the same Cape and the nearest coast of Labrador is still much less. As it cannot be above two hundred French leagues, the voyage could not take up above seven or eight days, even allowing for the delays that must have happened to the ancients through their want of that skill in navigation which the moderns have since acquired. This could therefore appear no such frightful distance to adventurers who had newly discovered Greenland, which is separated from Iceland at least as far. This reasoning is still farther enforced, when we reflect that the distance of Iceland itself, from the nearest part of Norway, is double to that above-mentioned.

In effect, the history of the North abounds with relations of maritime expedition of far greater extent than

than was necessary for the discovery of America. The situation of Greenland, relative to this new country, not being sufficiently known, is the only circumstance that can prejudice one against it ; but when we have mastered the greater object, why should we make any difficulty of the less ? We should cease to be surprized at those same men crossing a space of two hundred leagues, which was the distance between them and America, whose courage and curiosity had frequently prompted them to traverse the ocean, and who had been accustomed to perform voyages of three or four hundred leagues before they quitted their former settlements. We may indeed suppose, that when they made incursions into England, France, Spain, or Italy, they were directed by the coasts, from which they were never far distant ; but how can the rapidity of their motions be accounted for, if they never lost sight of land ? How could so imperfect a kind of navigation serve to convey into England such numerous fleets as sailed from Denmark and Norway ? How were Iceland, the isles of Faro, Shetland and Greenland explored ? There is nothing then in the distance of America that can render it unlikely to have been discovered by the Norwegians. Let us see if there are not other greater difficulties.

The relations handed down to us in the chronicles, and the name affixed to this new discovered country, agree in describing it as a soil where the vine spontaneously grows. This circumstance alone has served with many people to render the whole account suspected ;

pected ; but on a closer view, we shall find it so far from overthrowing, that it even confirms the other parts of the relation. I shall not evade the difficulty (as I might) by answering, that very possibly the Norwegians might be so little acquainted with grapes, as to mistake currants for them, which in the Northern languages are called *Viin-bær* *, or vine-berries ; and of which in several places they make a kind of fermented liquor : but I can assert on the faith of the most credible travellers, that not only in Canada the vine grows without cultivation, and bears a small well-tasted fruit ; but that it is also found in far more northern latitudes, and even where the winters are very severe. The evidence of Mr. Ellis † may here render all others needless. This curious and sensible observer met with the same kind of vine about the English settlements in Hudson's Bay ; the fruit of which he compares to the currants of the Levant.— Now Labrador is not far from thence ; it lies partly in the same, and partly in a more southern latitude, and their several productions seem to be much alike. Besides, as the Europeans never penetrated very far into the country, it would not prove that there were no vines there, even if THEY had not met with any. But we have room to expect greater discoveries on this subject from Mr. KALM, a Swedish botanist, educated

* *Viin-bær*, or rather *Win-bær*, is a general name in the North for Gooseberries, Currants, and Grapes. T.

† Voyage to Hudson's Bay, by Mr. Ellis. Vol. II.

tated under Linnæus, who some years since made a curious progress through Canada; with a view to its natural history and productions. According to him, the colony of VINLAND was in the island of Newfoundland, which is only separated from the continent of Labrador by a narrow strait of a few leagues called BELLE-ISLE *. This he has undertaken to prove in a part of his work not yet published; nor can any writer investigate such an inquiry so well as one who has been himself upon the spot.

As to the other circumstances of the relation, the account given by the ancient chronicles agrees in all respects with the reports of modern voyagers. These tell us, that the native savages of those countries, from the frequent use they make of them in fishing, can in a short time collect together a vast number of canoes; that they are very skilful with their bows and arrows; that on the coasts they fish for whales, and in the inland parts live by hunting; so that their merchandize consists of whale-bone and various kinds of skins and furs; that they are very fond of iron or hardware, especially arms, hatchets, and other instruments of like sort †; that they are very apt to rob strangers, but are otherwise cowardly and unwarlike.

If to this picture you add, that they are for the most part of a middle stature, and little skilled in the art of war, it is no wonder that the Norwegians, the largest,

* Kalm's *Resa til Norra-America*. Tome ii. p. 471.

† Vid. Ellis ubi supra.

largest, strongest and most active people of Europe should look upon them with contempt, as a poor, weak, degenerate race. It is remarkable that the name they gave them of SKRELINGUS is the same with which they denoted the Greenlanders when they first discovered them. In reality these GREENLANDERS and the ESKIMAUX seem to have been one people; and this likeness between them, which has so much struck the moderns, could not fail of appearing in a stronger light to the Norwegians, who were still better able to compare them together. "I believe, says Mr. Ellis, that the Eskimaux are the same people with the Greenlanders; and this seems the more probable, when we consider the narrowness of Davis's Streight, and the vagabond strolling life we find all this nation accustomed to lead wherever we meet with them." This is also the opinion of Mr. Egede, who knew the Greenlanders better than any body. He observes, that according to their own accounts, Davis's Streight is only a deep bay, which runs on, narrowing towards the north, till the opposite American continent can be easily discerned from Greenland, and that the extremity of this bay ends in a river, over which, wandering savages, inured to cold, might easily pass from one land to the other, even if they had had no canoes.

The result of all this seems to be, that there can be no doubt, but that the Norwegian Greenlanders discovered the American continent; that the place where they settled was either the country of Labrador, or

Newfoundland, and that their colony subsisted there a good while. But then this is all we can say about it with any certainty. To endeavour to ascertain the exact site, extent and fortune of the establishment, would be a fruitless labour. Time and chance may possibly one day inform us of these circumstances. I shall not therefore amuse the reader with uncertain conjectures ; neither shall I trouble him with such reflections as he is able to make much better than myself.

CHAR.

CHAPTER XII.

Of the customs and manners of the ancient Northern nations.

WHOEVER attempts to delineate the manners of the ancient inhabitants of the North, will find their love of war and passion for arms among the most characteristic and expressive lines of the portrait. Their prejudices, their customs, their daily occupations, their amusements, in short, every action of their lives were all impressed with this passion. They passed the greatest part of their time either in camps or on board their fleets, employed in real engagements, in preparations for them, or in sham fights ; for whenever they were constrained to live in peace, the resemblance

semblance of war furnished out their highest entertainment. They then had reviews, mock battles, which frequently ended in real ones, tournaments, the bodily exercises of wrestling, boxing, racing, &c. The rest of their time was commonly spent in hunting*, public business, drinking and sleeping. "The Germans," says Tacitus, "when not engaged in war, pass their time in indolence, feasting and sleep. The bravest and most warlike among them do nothing themselves; but transfer the whole care of the house, family and possessions to the females, the old men and such as are infirm among them: And the same people, by a strange contradiction of nature, both love inaction, and hate peace." All the Celtic nations lie under the same reproach from the Greek and Roman authors; and it is easy to conceive, that a people who affixed ideas of contempt to all labour of body and mind, had for the most part nothing

* So Cæsar writes of the Germans, *Vita omnis in venationibus atque in studiis rei militaris consistit.*—Tacitus is believed to have said the same thing in the passage quoted below, but as some of the words are thought to be corrupt, our author has dropt them in his quotation. The whole passage stands in the copies thus, *Quotiens bellum non incunt, NON multum venatibus; plus per otium transigunt, dediti som-*

no ciboque. (Tacit. Germ. c. 15.) The learned are generally of opinion, that the second NON here is spurious, and that we should read *multum venatibus*, or *tum vitam venatibus*, &c. But Pelloutier thinks Tacitus meant to insinuate that the Germans bestow a small portion of their time in hunting, but much more in idleness, feasting and sleeping. Hist. des Celtes. tom. i. p. 449. T.

nothing else to do but to carouse and sleep, whenever the state did not call them to arms. This was the badge and noblest privilege of their liberty ; every free man placed his glory and happiness in being often invited to solemn entertainments ; and the hopes of partaking of eternal feasts filled, as we have seen, the North with heroes. Other pleasures and other rewards have been conceived under the influence of other climes : All nations have in their infancy been governed by the force of climate ; and their first legislators, far from endeavouring to stem this torrent but borne away with it themselves, have ever by their laws and institutions enlarged and increased its natural prevalence. “ Among the Celts (as their learned “ historian tells us) there was no national or provincial assembly held ; no civil or religious festival “ observed ; no birth-day, marriage or funeral properly solemnized ; no treaty of alliance or friendship entered into, in which feasting did not bear a “ principal part *.” In all the historical monuments of ancient Scandinavia, we constantly hear of frequent and excessive feastings †. Tacitus observes, that the
 plentiful

* Vid. Pelloutier Hist. des Celtes. Tom. i. lib. 2. chap. 12.

† We find remarkable instances in the Icelandic Chronicles, quoted by Arngrim Jonas. Crymog. lib. i. cap. 6. p. 54. Two brothers in Iceland at the funeral of their father, made a feast for 1200 per-

sons, and regaled them fourteen days. Another inhabitant of Iceland entertained for the same number of days not less than 900 persons, and at last sent them away with presents. Feasts of this sort were frequent in Norway and throughout all the North. *1st Edit.*

plentiful tables of the chiefs, were, among the Germans, the wages of their dependants *. Nor could a great lord or chieftain take a readier way to attract a numerous train of followers, than by often making magnificent entertainments. It was at table that the Germans consulted together on their most important concerns, such as the electing of their princes, the entering into war, or the concluding of peace, &c. On the morrow they re-considered the resolutions of the preceding night; supposing, adds the same historian, “ that the proper time to take each others opinions “ was when the soul was too open for disguise; and “ to determine, when it was too cautious to err.”— The common liquors at these carousals were either beer, mead or wine when they could get it: These they drank out of earthen or wooden pitchers, or else out of the horns of wild bulls with which their forests abounded, or lastly out of the SCULLS of their enemies. The principal person at the table took the cup first, and rising up, saluted by name either him who sat next him, or him who was nearest in rank; then he drank it off, and causing it to be filled up again to the brim, presented it to the man whom he had saluted †. Hence came the custom of drinking to

* *Nam epulæ, et quæcumque incompti, largi tamen apparatus, pro stipendio cedunt.* Mor. Germ. cap. 14.

† This ancient ceremony is still

kept up, at solemn feasts, in some of the Colleges in our Universities.——In like manner our custom of drinking to the memory of departed persons, is evidently a relique

to the health of the guests : But I know not whether that of drinking to the honour of the Gods was generally practised among all the ' Gothic and' Celtic people, or only among some of the northern nations. Snorro Sturleson says, " That in the solemn festivals, " such as usually followed the sacrifices, they emptied what was called the Cup of ODIN, to obtain " victory and a glorious reign ; then the cups of NI- " ORD and of FREY, for a plentiful season ; after which " several used to take off another to BRAGE *, the " God of Eloquence and Poetry." The Scandinavians were so much addicted to this custom, that the first missionaries, unable to abolish it, were forced instead of these false deities to substitute the true God, Jesus Christ and the saints ; to whose honour they devoutly drank for many ages. In the pagan times they also drank to the heroes, and to such of their friends as had fallen bravely in battle. Lastly, it was at these feasts, for the most part, that those ASSOCIATIONS were formed and confirmed, which the old Chronicles so often mention. There was scarcely a valiant man who was not a member of one or more of these societies ; the chief tie of which was a solemn obligation entered

relique of the ancient superstition of drinking to the manes of their heroes, kings and friends.—

Heroum, regum, amicorum, et in bello fortiter rem gerentium, memoriales scyphos ' exhauriant,' quibus co-

rum manibus parentare se credebant. Wormius apud Barthol. Cauf. contempt. mort. p. 127. T.

* Vid. Barthol. de Cauf. contempt. mort. lib. i. cap. 8. p. 128.

entered into, to defend and protect their companions on all occasions, and to revenge their deaths at the hazard of their own lives *. This oath was taken and renewed at their festivals, which had also their respective laws. Fraternities of this sort still subsisted after the Christian religion was received in the North, but by degrees the object was changed. When the harbouring projects of enmity and revenge were forbidden at them, these meetings had no other object or support but drunkenness and intemperance. More than two hundred years after the Scandinavians had embraced Christianity there were still confraternities of which the first nobility were members. But the disorders

* In the early state of society, when the laws were too weak to afford protection, individuals had no other means of securing their lives and property, but by entering into these associations, in which a number of men engaged to vindicate and avenge each other. These confederacies, which were at first necessary for self-preservation, and might originally be confined to self-defence, often proceeded afterwards to act offensively, and so were productive of great mischiefs.

Confraternities of the same kind prevailed in this kingdom, not only during the Anglo-Saxon times, but for some ages after the conquest. They were called BAND-

SHIPS, and were often under the patronage of some great man; they had public badges by which each band or confederacy was distinguished, and at length grew to such a pass as to support each other in all quarrels, robberies, murders and other outrages: this occasioned a particular act of parliament for their suppression, 1 Rich. II. chap. 7.—Dr. Hickee has preserved a very curious bond of this kind, which he calls *Sodalitium*; it was drawn up in the Anglo-Saxon times, and contains many particulars which strongly mark the manners and character of those rude ages. See his *Dissertatio Epistolaria*, p. 21. T.

disorders committed at these meetings encreasing, the Councils were at last obliged to suppress them*.

While the attention of these people was thus engrossed by their passion for arms, and the pleasures of the table, we may conclude that love held no violent dominion over them. It is besides well known, that the inhabitants of the North are not of very quick sensibility. The ideas and modes of thinking of the Scandinavians were in this respect very different from those of the Asiatics and more southern nations; who by a contrast as remarkable as it is common, have ever felt for the female sex the warm passion of love, devoid of any real esteem. Being at the same time tyrants and slaves; laying aside their own reason, and

VOL. I.

L 1

requiring

* The reader will find many curious particulars relating to the above-mentioned confraternities, (in the antient Teutonic GYLLEN, sometimes written KELLEN, or GILDS as they are now called in the North) in BARTHOLOMÆUS; who has given some of the laws or statutes observed by them, particularly those found in a MS. of the thirteenth century.—One of these statutes will give us an idea of the sobriety of those times: *Si quis pro ebrietate ceciderit in ipsa domo convivii, vel antequam propriam curiam intraverit, Oram* (a small piece of money) *persolvat.* Not less remarkable are the statutes of another

confraternity instituted in honour of S. Olave king of Norway; among which we find these: *Quicumque potum suum effundit latius quam pede velare poterit, VI. Denarios persolvat. Quicumque dormierit in banco convivii in conspectu fratrum, Oram persolvat. Quicumque ebrietatis causâ in domo convivii vomitum fecerit, Dimidiam Marcam persolvat, &c.* (Barthol. caus. contempt. mort. &c. p. 133.)

Our modern Corporations and Clubs are evidently the offspring of the ("in the antient Teutonic GYLLEN, sometimes written KELLEN,") GILDS, or GUILDS of our northern ancestors. T.

requiring none in the object; they have ever made a quick transition from adoration to contempt, and from sentiments of the most extravagant and violent love, to those of the most cruel jealousy or of an indifference still more insulting. We find the reverse of all this among the northern nations, who did not so much consider the other sex as made for their pleasure, as to be their equals and companions, whose esteem, as valuable as their other favours, could only be obtained by constant attentions, by generous services, and by a proper exertion of virtue and courage. I conceive that this will at first sight be deemed a paradox, and that it will not be an easy matter to reconcile a manner of thinking which supposes so much delicacy, with the rough unpolished character of this people. Yet I believe the observation is so well grounded, that one may venture to assert, that it is this same people who have contributed to diffuse through all Europe that spirit of equity, of moderation, and generosity shewn by the stronger to the weaker sex, which is at this day the distinguishing characteristic of European manners; nay that we even owe to them that spirit of gallantry which was so little known to the Greeks and Romans, how polite soever in other respects.

That there should in the North be a communication of liberty and equality between the two sexes, is what one might expect to find there in those ancient times, when mens property was small and almost upon an equality; when their manners were simple; when

when their passions disclosed themselves but slowly, and then under the dominion of reason ; being moderated by a rigorous climate and their hard way of living ; and lastly, when the sole aim of government was to preserve and extend liberty. But the Scandinavians went still farther, and these same men, who on other occasions were too high-spirited to yield to any earthly power ; yet in whatever related to the fair sex seem to have been no longer tenacious of their rights or independence. The principles of the ancient Gothic or Celtic religion will afford us proofs of this respect paid to the ladies, and at the same time may possibly help us to account for it. I have often asserted that the immediate intervention of the Deity, even in the slightest things, was one of their most established doctrines, and that every, even the most minute appearance of nature, was a manifestation of the will of heaven to those who understood its language. Thus mens involuntary motions, their dreams, their sudden and unforeseen inclinations being considered as the salutary admonitions of heaven, became the objects of serious attention. And a universal respect could not but be paid to those who were considered as the organs or instruments of a beneficent Deity. Now women must appear much more proper than men for so noble a purpose, who being commonly more subject than we to the unknown laws of temperament and constitution, seem less to be governed by reflection, than by sensation and natural instinct. Hence it was that the Germans admitted them into their councils, and consulted

sulted with them on the business of the state. Hence it was that among them, as also among the Gauls, there were ten propheteſſes for one prophet; whereas in the East we find the contrary proportion, if indeed there was ever known an instance in those countries of a female worker of miracles. Hence also it was, that nothing was formerly more common in the North, than to meet with women who delivered oracular informations, cured the most inveterate maladies, assumed whatever shape they pleased, raised storms, chained up the winds, travelled through the air, and in one word, performed every function of the Fairy-art. Thus endowed with supernatural powers, these propheteſſes being converted as it were into fairies or demons, influenced the events they had predicted, and all nature became subject to their command. Tacitus puts this beyond a dispute when he says, "The Germans suppose some divine and prophetic quality resident in their women, and are careful neither to disregard their admonitions, nor to neglect their answers *." Nor can it be doubted but that the same notions prevailed among the Scandinavians. Strabo relates that the Cimbri were accom-

* Tacit. de Mor. Ger. c. 8.— "*tidicis veterum Celtarum gentium—* There is a remarkable passage on "*que Septentrionalium*," in his learned treatise, "*Antiquitates Selectæ* tagem. lib. i. and in Plutarch "*De Septentrionales*," &c. 1720. 12mo "*virtutibus mulierum*."—See KEYSER'S "*Disertatio de mulieribus fa-* p. 371. T.

accompanied by venerable and hoary-headed prophetesses, apparrelled in long linen robes most splendidly white. We also find this people always attended by their wives even in their most distant expeditions, hearing them with respect, and after a defeat, more afraid of their reproaches than of the blows of the enemy. To this we may add, that the men being constantly employed either in war or hunting, left to the women the care of acquiring those useful branches of knowledge which made them regarded by their husbands as prophetesses and oracles. Thus to them belonged the study of simples and the art of healing wounds, an art as mysterious in those times, as the occasions of it were frequent. In the ancient chronicles of the North, we find the matrons and the young women always employed in dressing the wounds of their husbands or lovers. It was the same with dreams; which the women alone were versed in the art of interpreting*.

But this is not all. At a time when piracy and a fondness for seeking adventures exposed weakness to continual and unexpected attacks, the women, especially those of celebrated beauty, stood in want sometimes of deliverers, and almost always of defenders. Every young warrior, eager after glory, (and this was often the character of whole nations,) must have been glad then to take upon him an office, which promised
such

* Probably because the women paid more attention to them than the men, and gave more credit to them. *First Edit.*

such just returns of fame, which flattered the most agreeable of all passions, and at the same time gratified another almost as strong, that for a wandering and rambling life. We are apt to value what we acquire, in proportion to the labour and trouble it costs us. Accordingly the hero looked upon himself as sufficiently rewarded for all his pains, if he could at length obtain the fair hand of her he had delivered; and it is obvious how honourable such marriages must have been among the people who thought in this manner. This emulation would quickly encrease the number of those gallant knights: And the women, on their parts, would not fail to acquire a kind of stateliness, considering themselves as no less necessary to the glory of their lovers, than to their happiness and pleasure. That fair one who had stood in need of several champions, yielded only to the most courageous; and she who had never been in a situation that required protectors, was still desirous of the lover who had proved himself capable of encountering all kind of dangers for her sake. This was more than enough to inflame such spirits as these with an emulation of surpassing each other, and of displaying their courage and intrepidity. Besides, the character of the northern women themselves left the men no other less glorious means of gaining their hearts. Naturally chaste and proud, there was no other way, but this to come at them. Educated under the influence of the same prejudices concerning honour as the men, they were early taught to despise those who spent their youth

youth in a peaceful obscurity. All the historical records of ancient Scandinavia prove what I advance. We see there the turn for chivalry as it were in the bud. The history of other nations shews it afterwards as it were opening and expanding in Spain, France, Italy and England, being carried there by the swarms that issued from the North. It is in reality this same spirit, reduced afterwards within juster bounds, which has been productive of that polite gallantry so peculiarly observable in our manners, which adds a double relish to the most pleasing of all social bands, which unites the lasting charms of sentiment, regard, and friendship, with the fleeting fire of love, which tempers and animates one by the other, adds to their number, power, and duration, and which cherishes and unfolds sensibility, that most choice gift of nature, without which neither decorum, propriety, chaste friendship, nor true generosity can exist among men. It would be needless to prove, that we are not indebted for this manner of thinking to the ancient Romans. We may appeal for this to all who know any thing of their character. But though I assert that the respect we shew to the fair sex is probably derived from that superstitious reverence which our ancestors had for them, and is only a relique of that ancient authority, which the women enjoyed among the northern nations ; I ought also to prove by facts an opinion so contrary to established prejudices, and at first sight so unlikely to be true. To do this will be easy.

Every

Every page of northern history presents us with warriors as gallant as intrepid. Inspired by that passion which Montagne calls "the spring of great actions," king REGNER LODBROG, whom I have so often mentioned, and who was one of the most celebrated heroes of his time, signalized his youth by a gallant exploit. A Swedish prince had a daughter named THOR^a, whose beauty was celebrated throughout the North. Fearing lest she might fall into the hands of a ravisher, he secured her, probably during his absence, in a castle of his, under the guardianship of one of his officers. This man falling violently in love with his ward, absolutely refused to resign his charge, and had taken such precautions to keep her in his hands, that the Swedish prince in vain endeavoured to set her at liberty. Despairing at last to succeed in the attempt himself, he published through all the neighbouring countries, that he would bestow his daughter in marriage on any person, of whatever condition, who should conquer her ravisher*. Of all those who aspired to so noble a prize, young Regner was the happy man who delivered and married the fair captive. This exploit, as he tells us in an ode which he wrote a very little time before his death, placed

* Vid. Torf. Hist. Norveg. tom. i. lib. 10. This officer being probably called ORM, i. e. Serpent, which was a name very common in those times, the poets took oc-

casion to say that THORA was guarded by a furious Dragon. Allegories of this sort are quite in the taste and manner of that age. *First Edit.*

placed him in the rank of heroes. After Thora's decease, Regner espoused a young shepherdess whom he had seen by accident on the coast of Norway. As the particular circumstances of this event are to my present purpose, I will briefly relate them from a very ancient Icelandic history of the life of Regner *.

The name of this most beautiful nymph was AS-LAUGA, who no sooner saw a fleet draw near the shore where she fed her flock, but yielding to the natural passion of her sex, repaired to a neighbouring fountain, where she carefully washed her face and hands, and combed her long golden hair which hung down to her feet. The people whom Regner had ordered on shore to seek for provisions, were so amazed at her beauty, that they returned to their commander, bringing nothing back with them but astonishment and admiration. The King surprised at their account, was desirous to judge himself whether the young maid was really so handsome as to make his men forget the orders he had given them. With this design he sent one of his chief attendants to invite Aslauga on board; but she was prudent enough to refuse him, till Regner had given his honour, that no attempts should be made on her virtue. Then suffering herself to be conducted to the king, he no sooner saw her, than struck with admiration, he sung extemporary verses to this effect: " O most mighty Odin ! what a

Vol. I.

M m

" sweet

* Vid. Regnara Lodbrogs Saga. c. 5. ap. Bioneri Histor. Reg. Her. & Pugil, Res præclar. gest. Stockholm. 1737.

" sweet and unexpected consolation would it be, if
 " this young and lovely shepherdess would permit
 " me to join my hands to hers as a pledge of eternal
 " alliance !" Aslauga perceiving that the king's pas-
 sion every moment increased, was apprehensive he
 would not keep his word, and in answer to such a
 flattering compliment, only returned these verses,
 (for such language was at that time much more po-
 lite than prose, and argued, as we shall see presently,
 good breeding and wit,) " O prince, you will deserve
 " to undergo some misfortune, if you fail in your
 " word to me. I have paid my respects to the king,
 " and he ought now to send me back to my parents."
 This answer only inflamed the Danish monarch's love,
 and he proposed to carry her to his court, where her
 happy lot should be the envy of all her companions.
 To add weight to his intreaties, he offered her a rich
 vestment ornamented with silver, which had belonged
 to his former queen Thora, and still addressing her in
 verse, " Take," says he, " if you are wise, this robe
 " embroidered with silver, which belonged to Thora.
 " Rich garments are made for you. The lovely
 " hands of Thora have often run over this piece of
 " work, and it will be dear to the last moment of
 " life, to him whom the North hath called the prince
 " of heroes."

Aslauga was still proof against this flattering at-
 tack : " No !" replied she singing, " I must not ac-
 " cept of so fine a robe, the ornament of queen Tho-
 " ra. I am unworthy to bear such magnificent gar-
 " ments ;

“ ments ; a stuff, dark and coarse, is all that is besitting a shepherds whose resting-place is a cottage, and who wanders along the sandy shores after her flock.” Recurring at length to a more natural language, she assured the king, that notwithstanding the warmth of his passion, she was determined not to yield to it, till she had seen proofs of his constancy ; that he must therefore finish the expedition which called him out of his kingdom, and then at his return, if he still persevered in the same sentiments, she was ready to attend into Denmark those whom he should send to conduct her thither. The amorous Regner was forced to subscribe to these conditions, and immediately departed, protesting that she should very soon see him return victorious, and more captivated with her than ever. In a few months the king repaired with his fleet to the coast where the fair one dwelt, who was soon conducted to him. She had, however, sufficient address and ascendant over him to obtain that their marriage should not be solemnized till they returned to Denmark, and could celebrate it in presence of the whole court.

This relation, which is literally copied from the original, shews that decency and decorum were not unknown to the Scandinavians of those days : for to see these observed in a case where even among the most polished people they are too often neglected, and where the most bewitching of all passions, when aided by power, unites to cast a veil over them, is the strongest evidence that can possibly be required. For
the

the rest, I will not promise that the ancient writer, who has given us this story, may not have added some circumstances of his own ; though the traditionary records of the country confirm his narrative, and Torfæus places it among the best-authenticated histories : but even supposing the greatest part of it fictitious, it is enough that it be ancient, and written by one well versed in the history and manners of his country. It is really of little consequence whether Regner actually performed, or not, every action the chronicles relate, provided they attribute nothing to him but what corresponds with the genius and character of his contemporaries.

It were easy to produce other instances to justify the description I have drawn above, but it is enough to relate only one more, which we meet with in the life of HARALD HAREFARE, of whom we have so often spoken. His birth and merits were equally illustrious ; his courage, his fine figure, and his long golden silky locks, conspired to render him, according to our chronicles, the secret passion of the most lovely princesses of his time.

Notwithstanding these accomplishments, a young beauty named GRDA, the daughter of a rich Norwegian lord, made him experience a resistance to which he had not been accustomed. Harald, in love with her from hearsay, commissioned some lords of his court to make her an offer of his hand : but far from readily accepting a proposal which would have rendered her the envy of all the young ladies of the North,

North, she haughtily answered, That to merit her love, Harald should signalize himself by more noble exploits than he had hitherto performed; that she disdained to share the fortune of a prince whose territories were so small, and that she could never esteem him worthy of her, till like the other sovereigns of the North, he had reduced all Norway under his power. Instead of being piqued at this refusal, Harald's admiration for the ambitious Gida was redoubled, and he made a vow to neglect his fine hair, till he had compleated the conquest of Norway: nor did he marry her, till all that kingdom submitted to him *.

Now it is not to be supposed that sentiments of this sort were peculiar only to Harald, Regner, or some one single hero. The northern chronicles present us every where with instances of this female sovereignty: and we always find none more subject to it than those who were most distinguished for their noble birth and gallant actions.

As few young men of any rank were able to obtain an advantageous or honourable alliance, until they had distinguished themselves in war, we may naturally conclude they could not marry till late in life. This is also confirmed by other proofs. Cæsar says, that " among the Germans, the greatest praise is al-
 " lowed to those who remain the longest unmarried;
 " and that it is reckoned very shameful for young
 " men to be acquainted with women before they are

" TWENTY

* Vid. Torf. H. N. tom. ii. lib. i.

" TWENTY YEARS of age *." Tacitus adds, that "the Germans retain the vigour of youth the longer, by deferring their union with the other sex; nor are they in haste to marry their daughters †." That age once past, it was common for the people of the North to marry two wives or more, and this was a very ancient custom. Men of wealth and power considered a number of wives as a mark of grandeur. And according to Tacitus ‡, political reasons also sometimes brought about these matches, since the great were often obliged to yield to the importunity of families which sought their alliance. The Christian religion, not without great difficulty, got the better of this custom; which still prevailed in the North so late as the tenth century. All the children claimed equally from their father, nor was the title of bastard given to any, unless to such as were born without any kind of matrimonial rite. Nevertheless, one of the wives seems to have possessed a superior rank, and to have been considered as the chief and most legitimate. But as it was her distinguished prerogative to accompany her lord to the grave or funeral pile, she would hardly be an object of envy or jealousy among the ladies of the present age.

The

* Cæf. de Bell. Gall. lib. vi. 19. *Hoc alii statueram, alii vires, nervosque confirmari putant.* T. time were for the most part content with one wife, *Exceptis admodum paucis*, adds he, *qui non libidine,*

† Tacit. Germ. c. 20.

sed ob nobilitatem plurimis nuptiis ambiuntur. De mor. Ger. c. 18. T.

‡ He says, the Germans in his

The matrimonial ceremonies were very simple, and chiefly consisted in feasting *. The bridegroom having obtained the maiden's consent, together with that of her parents and guardians, appointed the day ; and having assembled his own relations and friends, sent some of them to receive in his name the bride and her portion from her father. The friends were answerable for the charge that was committed to them, and if they abused their trust, the law amerced them in a sum treble to what was paid for murder. The father or guardian of the young woman attended her also to the husband's house, and there gave her into his hands †. After this, the new-married pair sat down to table with their guests, who drank to their healths along with those of the gods and heroes. The bride's friends then took her up and bore her on their shoulders, which was a mark of esteem among the Goths ; her father afterwards led her to the nuptial bed, a great number of lights being carried before her ; a custom known to the Greeks and Romans, and still in use in some parts of the North. The marriage being consummated, the husband made his wife several presents, such as a pair of oxen for the plough, an harnessed

* Vid. Dalin. Suea-Rikes Hist. tom. i. c. 9. " keeping of the keys of thy

† At the same time he commonly made some speech to this effect : " I give thee my daughter in honourable wed-lock ; to have the half of thy bed, the

" house, one THIRD of the money
 " thou art at present possessed of,
 " or shalt possess hereafter, and to
 " enjoy the other rights appointed
 " ed by law." *First Edit.*

nessed horse, a buckler, together with a lance and a sword. "This was to signify," says Tacitus *, "that she ought not to lead an idle and luxurious life, but that she was to be a partaker with him in his labours, and a companion in dangers, which they were to share together in peace and war." He adds, that "the women on their parts gave some arms; this was the sacred band of their union, these their mystic rites, and these the deities who presided over their marriage." The yoked oxen, the caparisoned horse, and the arms, all served to instruct the women how they were to lead their life, and how perhaps it might be terminated. The arms were to be carefully preserved, and being enabled by the use the husband made of them, were to be consigned as portions for their daughters, and to be handed down to posterity.

The German women have been justly noted for fidelity to the marriage-bed ; and indeed chastity seems to have been the general character of this nation. Let us see what that most excellent writer Tacitus says on this subject : "A strict regard for the sanctity of the matrimonial state characterizes the Germans, and deserves our highest applause. . . . Among them female virtue runs no hazard of being debauched by the outward objects which are presented to the senses, or of being corrupted by such social gaieties as inflame the passions. The art of corresponding

* Tac. de mor. Germ. c. 18.

“ responding by letters is equally unknown to both
 “ sexes. Very few adulteries happen in that popu-
 “ lous nation : where the power of instantly inflict-
 “ ing punishment is granted to the injured husband ;
 “ who after having cut off her hair in the presence of
 “ her relations, drives her naked out of his house,
 “ and whips her through the village. Chastity once
 “ prostituted, is never forgiven ; nor to such an one
 “ can the attractions of beauty, youth or riches pro-
 “ cure an husband. Vice is not there made the ob-
 “ ject of wit and mirth ; nor can the fashion of the
 “ age be pleaded in excuse either for being corrupt,
 “ or for endeavouring to corrupt others. . . .
 “ Good customs and manners avail more among these
 “ barbarians, than good laws among a more refined
 “ people *.”

Our own historical monuments confirm these testi-
 monies. I have before observed, that their religion
 threatened the seducers of women with the severest
 torments of the next world. Adam of Bremen, in
 his voyage to Denmark observes, that adultery was
 there most strictly punished ; and that the woman
 who was detected in it, was sold on the spot. The
 law in Iceland was equally remarkable ; for it not on-
 ly denounced very severe punishments against rapes
 and adulteries, but proceeded farther ; expressly pro-
 hibiting even kissing or secret embraces. Whoever
 kissed a woman against her own consent, was con-

VOL. I.

N n

demned

damned to exile ; and even with her consent, he was fined three marks of silver. Every degree of this crime was rated in the same proportion. If a man abused a free woman, he was punished with death ; and if one that had been freed, with banishment ; if a slave, he was amerced three marks *. Among the Swedes and Danes, the husband who caught his wife in the act of adultery, might immediately kill her, and castrate the gallant. Saxo takes notice of the same law, which he attributes to king Frotho †.

When the people of the North migrated into the southern parts of Europe, they carried along with their laws, a chastity and reserve, which excited universal surprize. Salvian, a priest of Marseilles in the 5th century, exclaims, " Let us blush," says he, " and be covered with a confusion which ought to produce salutary effects. Wherever the Goths become masters, we see no longer any disorders, except among the old inhabitants. Our manners are reformed under the dominion of Vandals. Behold an incredible event ! an unheard-of prodigy ! Barbarians have by the severity of their discipline rendered chaste the Romans themselves : and the Goths have purified those places which the others had defiled by their debaucheries. A cruel nation," adds he, " but worthy to be admired for their

* Arngrim. Jon. Crymog. p. 89.

† Sax. Gram. lib. v.

“ their continent^{*}.” These virtues were not there of long continuance; the climate soon warmed their frozen imaginations; their laws by degrees relaxed, and their manners still more than their laws.

A numerous offspring was commonly produced from these marriages; but neither the rich, nor the poor scrupled to expose such of their children as they did not chuse to bring up†. Both the Greeks and Romans were guilty of this barbarous practice, long before they can be said to have been corrupted by prosperity, luxury and the arts: So true is it that ignorance is no security from vice, and that men always know enough to invent crimes. It is no less remarkable, that a kind of infant baptism was practised in the North, long before the first dawning of Christianity had reached those parts. Snorro Sturleson, in his Chronicle, speaking of a Norwegian nobleman, who lived in the reign of Harald Harfagre, relates, that he poured water on the head of a new-born child, and called him HAGON, from the name of his father‡. Harald himself had been baptized in the same manner, and it is noted of king OLAVE TRYGGVÆSON, that his mother Astride had him thus baptized and named as soon as he was born. The Livonians observed the same ceremony; which also prevailed among the Germans, as appears from a letter which the famous Pope

* Salvian. lib. vii. de Gubern. Dei.

† Vid. Verel. Not. ad Hervor. cap. vi. p. 87.

‡ Vid. Snor. Sturles. c. lx

Pope Gregory the Third sent to their apostle Boniface, directing him expressly how to act in this respect *. It is probable that all these people might intend by such a rite to preserve their children from the forceries and evil charms which wicked spirits might employ against them at the instant of their birth. Several nations of Asia and America have attributed such a power to ablutions of this kind ; nor were the Romans without such a custom, though they did not wholly confine it to new-born infants †.

I shall not here repeat what I have said above concerning the hardy way of bringing up children in the North. But I cannot omit mentioning the great advantages gained from it in respect to their health and bodily force. The Greek and Latin authors speak with surprize of the size and strength of the northern men. Cæsar observes of the Suevi, that they feed chiefly on milk, and exercise themselves much in hunting, which together with the free unrestrained life they lead, never being from their childhood impelled against their inclinations to any discipline or duty, he assigns as effective causes of their very large and robust make †. Vegetius expressly affirms, that
the

* Vid. Epist. 122. apud Nic. Serar. in Epist. Sti. Bonifacii martyria.

† Vid. Keyfler. Antiq. Select. p. 313. who has a very learned Note on this subject, where he has col-

lected together a number of curious passages from authors ancient and modern, Classic and Barbarous writers, relating to this practice. T.

† Bell. Gall. lib. iv. c. i.

the tallness of the Germans gave them great advantage in combat over the lesser Romans. The lances, swords and other arms which have been preserved to this time, and may yet continue to more remote ages, are objects of curiosity and astonishment to those whose ancestors were able to wield them. But the greatest proof of their prodigious strength arises from the rude enormous monuments of architecture which were raised by these northern people. We have all heard of that monument on Salisbury plain in England, where we see a multitude of vast stones of monstrous weight set up end-wise, and serving as bases to other stones, many of which are in length sixteen feet. Nor are the monuments of this kind less astonishing, which we meet with in Iceland, in Westphalia, and particularly in East-Friesland, Brunswick, Mecklenburg, and many parts of the North *. The dark ignorance of succeeding ages not being able to comprehend how such stupendous edifices could be constructed by mortals, have attributed them to demons and giants. But although the founders of these had not probably all the assistance we derive from the mechanic powers, yet great things might be accomplished by men of such mighty force co-operating together.

* A description of most of the monuments above-mentioned, with their figures engraven on copper-plates, may be seen in KEYSER. *Antiq. Select. Septen. Sect. i. cap.*

I. (cui titulus *Descriptio monumenti Salisburienfis, similibusque quæ in Germania terrisque Aisnois videntur.*) T.

gether *. The Americans, unaided by the engines we apply to these purposes, have raised up such vast stones in building their temples, as we dare not undertake to remove †. One may, however, conceive that patience, united with strength, might, by taking time, be able to move such vast bodies from one place to another, and afterwards to set them up on end, by means of artificial banks, down the slopes of which they made them slide. It is without dispute from such proofs of the great size and strength of the first inhabitants

*In an ancient Icelandic chronicle, mention is made of a Norwegian named FINBOG, celebrated for his strength. One day, says the Author, he pulled up an enormous stone, that was deep fixed in the earth, he took two other great stones and placed them upon it, he carried them all three upon his belly for some minutes, and at length threw them from him with such violence, that the greatest of them remained buried a great way in the earth. (Vid. Christ. Worm. Diff. de Aræ Múltisc. vit. & script. p. 172.)

A multitude of such men uniting together, might be able to displace large and heavy fragments of rocks, and by means of the scaffolding they used, viz. artificial banks, &c. might be able to set

them upright. *First Edit.*

† See ACOSTA's Hist. of the Indies, lib. vi. cap. 14. This author, speaking of the buildings and fortresses which the Incas had erected in Cusco, and other places of Peru, says, "they used no mortar nor cement, neither had iron nor steel to cut the stones with; no engines or other instruments to carry them; and yet they were so artificially wrought, that in many places the joints are hardly seen:" and as for their size, he assures us he measured one of the stones himself, which was "38 feet long, 18 feet broad, and six thick. And in the wall of the fortress of Cusco there are stones of a still greater bigness." T.

inhabitants of the earth, that ancient history has generally painted them as giants. The atmosphere, which was formerly more cold and bracing in Europe than it is now *, the continual exercises which men then persisted in, together with their continence, their avoiding an early commerce with the other sex, their simple diet and savage life, in the fatigues of which the mind bore no part, were without doubt the causes which produced such enormous animals ; and will convince us, whenever the like circumstances again occur, that Nature, ever young and inexhaustible, will always produce the like effects.

To that wonderful constitutional vigour the Scandinavians were indebted for such a long and healthy old age as many of them enjoyed : an advantage which they for the most part only regarded with indifference, and even with disdain, though so highly valued by mankind since the acquisition of arts, and the refinements of pleasure have shortened the date, but rendered the journey of life more agreeable. In truth, few of them awaited the distant period allotted by nature ; single combats or general engagements, the dangers and fatigues of the sea, together with the frequent practice of suicide, were so many passages ever open to conduct them to that glorious path which they thought led to a happy futurity. The influence which this doctrine had upon their minds, cannot be more particularly seen, than in the
customs

* See on this subject the conclusion of next chapter.

customs observed in their last scene of life and funeral ceremonies. In the most early ages these were very simple. Before the arrival of Odin, the Scandinavians did nothing more than lay the dead body, together with his arms, under a little heap of earth and stones; but he introduced into the North new customs attended with more magnificence. In the succeeding ages, the Danes were wont to raise funeral piles, and reduce the bodies to ashes; which were collected together into an urn, and deposited under a little mound of earth. But this foreign custom was never quite universal, and the old rite took place again, according to conjecture, within five or six hundred years. These two funeral ceremonies have distinguished two distinct æras in the ancient northern history. The first was called the AGE OF FIRE *, and the second the AGE OF HILLS †; which last prevailed 'till Christianity triumphed in the North.

When an hero or chief fell gloriously in battle, his funeral obsequies were honoured with all possible magnificence. His arms, his gold and silver, his war-horse, his domestic attendants, and whatever else he held most dear, were placed with him on the pile. His dependants and friends frequently made it a point of honour to die with their leader, in order to attend on his shade in the palace of Odin. And lastly, his wife

* *Brenne-Alderen.*

† *Hog-Alderen*: That is, the Age of Little Hills, or BARROWS, as they are called in the south-west parts of this island.

wife was generally consumed with him on the same pile. If the defunct, as was often the case, had more wives than one, the privilege of following her dead lord to his grave was claimed by her who had been his chief favourite during life. In this manner was Nanna consumed in the same fire with the body of her husband Balder, one of Odin's companions *. In the history of Olave Tryggveson, left us by an old Icelandic writer, we have a memorable passage relative to this strange custom : " ERIC, king of Sweden, " (says this author,) put away his wife Segride on " account of her intolerably insolent and imperious " temper. But others assert that her dismissal was " a voluntary act of her own, because she had learnt " that her husband had but ten years to live, and " that she should be obliged to be buried with him, " according to the usage of the country. For Eric " had made a vow during the heat of an engagement, " to put an end to his own life at the completion of " that space of time." This shews, that the Scandinavian women were not always willing to make so cruel and absurd a sacrifice to the manes of their husbands; the idea of which had been picked up by their Scythian ancestors, when they inhabited the warmer climates of Asia, where they had had their first abode. In some parts of the Indies this custom is still, and ever has been religiously observed. " The

VOL. I.

O o

" same

* Vid. Edda Mythol. 43. et vid. etiam Hist. Norveg. Torf. passim. Olof. Tryggvasons Saga, c. 2. et Keyser Antiq. Scil. p. 147.

“ same lively imaginations, and the same delicate “ nerves” (as the sensible author of the Spirit of Laws well remarks) “ which inspire the people of “ these hot climates with the fear of death, make “ them at the same time dread a thousand things “ worse even than death itself.” Although it was thus founded on a principle of religion, such an absurd custom has long subsided in Europe. Cæsar observes, that this usage had ceased in Gaul long before the Romans were acquainted with them *. The Germans, in the time of Tacitus, were content to give their departed friends their horses to accompany them ; and in all probability, if it had not been for the institutions of Odin, these sacrifices of the wives to the manes of their dead lords had been abolished much earlier in Scandinavia.

Be that as it would : Nothing seemed to them more grand and noble than to enter the hall of Odin with a numerous retinue of slaves, friends and horses, all in their finest armour and richest apparel. The princes and nobles never failed of such attendants. His arms, and the bones of the horse on which Chilperic I. supposed he should be presented to this warrior God, have been found in his tomb. They did in reality firmly believe, and Odin himself had assured them, that whatever was buried or consumed with the dead, accompanied them to his palace. The poorer people, from the same persuasion, carried at least their

* Cæsar de bell. Gall. lib. vi. c. 19. Pomp. Mela, lib. iii. c. 8.

their most necessary utensils and a little money, not to be entirely destitute in the other world. From a like motive, the Greeks and Romans put a piece of silver into the dead man's mouth, to pay his passage over the Styx. The Laplanders to this day provide their dead with a flint and every thing necessary for lighting them along the dark passage they have to traverse after death. In whatever degree civilized nations resemble the savage part of mankind, their strongest features are those which respect religion, death and a future state. Men cannot contemplate these interesting objects coolly, nor uninfluenced by such hopes and fears as shackle and impede the proper exertion of their reasoning faculties. Accordingly, all that the theology of the Egyptians, the Greeks and Romans, those people in other respects so wise, taught them on many points, was only one great delirium, and was (if we consider it impartially) in no respect superior to that of the ancient Celts and Scandinavians; if indeed it was not more indecent and extravagant still than theirs.

Odin was supposed to guard these rich deposits from the sacrilegious attempts of rapine by means of certain sacred and wandering fires which played round the tombs. And for their better security, the law promulged its severest edicts against all offences of this kind. The nineteenth chapter of the Salic-law is full of the different punishments decreed against such as shall carry off the boards or carpeting with which the sepulchres were covered; and interdicts them
from

from fire and water. This law appears to have been well observed in the North during the times of paganism, since in digging into old burial grounds there are now frequently found arms, spurs, rings, and different kinds of vases. Such were the contents of the tomb that was opened near Guben in Germany*. The person who had been interred there, seems to have been a lover of good cheer; for he had carried with him several utensils of cookery, together with flaggons and drinking vessels of all sizes. In the British Isles, in Germany, in Scandinavia, and in many countries in the northern and eastern parts of Asia, are found monuments of the ancient inhabitants, in the form of little round hills, and often surrounded with stones, on open plains, or near some road. It is the received opinion that these are the burying places of giants, and indeed bones larger than the human size are often found in them; but we must remember, that as the ancients durst not approach the palace of Odin on foot, and for that reason had their horses buried with them, it is very probable that the bones of these animals are often mistaken for those of men.

* *Nimische en pago uno milliari a Gubena distante univervus adparatus culinarivus erutus, oacabi, olla, catini, phiale, patina, urceoli, lagenule, &c.* Vide Keyfler. Antiq. Sele&. Septen. p. 173. T.

CHAPTER XIII.

Sequel of the customs, arts and sciences of the ancient Scandinavians.

THE arts which are necessary to the convenience of life, are but indifferently cultivated among a people, who neglect the more pleasing and refined ones. The Scandinavians held them all equally in contempt: What little attention they bestowed on any, was chiefly on such as were subservient to their darling passion. This contempt for the arts, which mens' desire of justifying their own sloth inspires, received additional strength from their sanguinary religion, from their extravagant fondness for liberty, which could not brook a long confinement in the same place,

place, and especially from their rough, fiery and quarrelsome temper, which taught them to place all the happiness and glory of man in being able to brave his equals, and to repel insults.

As long as this inclination had its full sway among a people, who were perpetually migrating from one forest to another, and entirely maintained from the produce of their flocks and herds, they never thought of cultivating the soil. In the time of Tacitus, the Germans were little used to agriculture. "They cultivate," says that historian, "sometimes one part of the country, and sometimes another; and then make a new division of the lands. They will much easier be persuaded to attack, and reap wounds from an enemy, than to till the ground and wait the produce. They consider it as an indication of effeminacy, and want of courage to gain by the sweat of their brow, what they may acquire at the price of their blood *." This prejudice gradually wore out, and they applied themselves more to agriculture. The great consumption of grain in a country, where the principal part of their food and their ordinary liquor was chiefly made of nothing else, could not but produce this effect. In the ninth and tenth centuries we see the free-men, the nobility and the men of great property, directing the operations of husbandry themselves †. At length Christianity hav-

ing

* Tac. Germ. c. 14, &c.

† Vid. Afsng. Jon. Crymog. lib. i. p. 52.

ing entirely extinguished the taste for piracy, and thus restored to the land one half of its inhabitants, laid them under a necessity of deriving from thence all their subsistence.

But the other arts were still depressed under the influence of this prejudice, and were for a long time considered as abject occupations befitting none but slaves; which not only dishonoured the present professors, but even fixed a stain on all their posterity *. The Gauls, the Germans, and the Scandinavians never employed in any of their domestic and handicraft trades other than slaves, freed-men, women or such miserable old men as preferred a dishonourable life to death. They were of course ignorant of all the pleasing conveniences and ornaments of life, excepting such as they either acquired by violence in their piratical excursions, or gained to themselves by foreign service. Their wives spun themselves the wool which made one part of their cloathing, and skins supplied the rest. Their habits sat close to their bodies, and were short and neat like those of all the 'Gothic†' nations;

* The Greeks and Romans did not think more philosophically on this subject than these rude uncivilized nations: if indeed it can be called Philosophy, and not rather Common Sense, to estimate things in proportion to their utility, and to be sensible that we owe

to the Arts most of the comforts we enjoy. *First Edit.*

† (Celtic Orig.) In the habits of the ancient Gothic nations, we see evidently the rudiments of the modern European dress: They consisted of a kind of waistcoat, and breeches, or rather a kind of trousers

nations : not wide, long and flowing like those of the Sarmatians and eastern people. They were perhaps still less luxurious in their manner of lodging.

In the time of Tacitus, the Germans had not yet built themselves cities, or even towns : "Every one," says that author, " places his house on whatever spot he chooses, near a spring, a wood or open field, at a distance from any neighbour, either from ignorance in the art of building, or for fear of fire *." When religion permitted temples to be erected to the Gods, the concourse of those who came to offer oblations, engaged them to build round about them, and towns insensibly arose. The same thing happened near the castles of their kings, princes and great men ; and lastly, the markets, whither the peasants repaired for the mutual exchange of those few commodities in which the trade of these days consisted, gave birth to a third kind of towns, which still in their names bear evident traces of their original †. The houses of which these towns consisted were nothing better, for the most part, than cottages supported by thick heavy posts joined together by boards, and covered with turf.

trowfers which came down to the feet, and were connected with the shoes ; whereas the ancient Romans were naked knee'd. Upon the pillars of Trajan and Antonine, the dresses of such nations as

were of Gothic race bear a great resemblance to those of our common sailors and peasants. T.

* Tac. Germ. c. 16.

† The general termination of these is *Köping*, i. e. Market.

surf*. The very lowest rank of people were not even so well off; having no other defence from the severity of the winter, but only miserable huts, ditches or clefts in the rocks. There lying on the bare ground, half covered with a few skins tacked together with thorns, they passed their time in a kind of drowsy torpor, (happy, if it be possible to be so by the mere privation of misfortunes,) till roused by some call of war, all this ferocious and savage youth rushed from their caverns to go to set fire to the palaces of Rome, and to trample under foot all the fine monuments of luxury, industry and arts. But I again repeat it, that it was only a small part of this people who lived so totally ignorant of the conveniences of life. Their grandees were early distinguished by edifices sumptuous for those times. Their chief ambition was to have them of vast extent, and adorned with very lofty towers. The most wealthy of those Norwegian lords who settled in Iceland built there houses of monstrous greatness. Arngrim† assures us, that Ingulph's palace was 135 feet in length; and mentions others not inferior to it; but it is very likely that these were only a kind of covered inclosures which took in both their slaves and cat-

VOL. I.

P. p

tle.

* In these buildings the light for the most part was only received from the top; whether it was that the use of windows was then unknown, or regarded by the sa-

ges of the country as a dangerous luxury. Vid. Arngr. Jon. Crymog. lib. i. c. 6. *First Edit.*

† Vid. Crymog. p. 57.

ple. The most valuable ornaments of their palaces were the cielings, on which were represented in sculpture the memorable actions of the possessor or his ancestors. Fragments of these are still found in Iceland, which appear to have been done eight hundred years ago, and contribute to throw light on the history of the country. Nor is this sculpture so bad as might be expected. The mountaineers of Norway and Sweden have to this day a remarkable dexterity at carving with the knife, and in the cabinets of the curious are preserved many pieces which surprizingly shew how far genius can advance unassisted by art *. Such of the Scandinavians as settled in richer countries, soon adopted the luxury of their new fellow-citizens, and were as desirous as they of distinguishing themselves by sumptuous buildings. But although they had still before their eyes those fine monuments which the envious hand of time has denied to us, yet the beautiful and noble simplicity of the antique proportions escaped them; they disfigured them by that affectation of excessive ornament, from whence sprang the Gothic stile of architecture, so called from this people, which so long prevailed thro' all Europe, and produced so many edifices wherein we can find nothing to admire but the inexhaustible patience and infinite pains of those who built them.

We may judge from the foregoing pages of the state
of

* Vid. Pontoppid. Hist. Nat. Norv. tom. ii. c. 10.

of commerce in ancient Scandinavia. It is true, the fondness of the inhabitants for navigation ought to have been favourable to it ; but we know that piracy, which is the result of idleness in those who practise it, reduces to idleness those who suffer by it, as it renders all industry useless. We must not, however, suppose, that this people carried on no kind of traffic. I think one may discover some views of this sort in those maritime expeditions of the Norwegians which have been related above : and this conjecture seems to be confirmed by the great quantity of foreign money which is still found in different parts of the North ; if indeed these are not rather reliques of the plunder collected by these ravagers. It is probable, that for a long time commerce was carried on by means of this foreign coin, in those parts where they had a sufficient quantity of it, and in other places by an exchange of commodities. We do not find that there was any money coined in the three northern kingdoms before the tenth or at most the ninth century ; and there is reason to believe, it was Canute the Great who first brought over Englishmen for the purpose of coining those little pieces of copper money which are still shewn, and are generally impressed with the figure of a cross, the sun, or a star, without any letters or inscription. Under the pagan princes, money was also much in use as the common medium of value, but it seems to have only passed by weight.

We



We may readily suppose that the Scandinavians studied astronomy. A science so requisite for sailors could not but make a great part of the education of a people who aspired to fame by maritime enterprizes. The ancient chronicles frequently present us with young warriors endeavouring to acquire the good opinion of their mistresses by boasting of their accomplishments, such as their skill at chess, their dexterity in swimming and skating, their talents in poetry, and their knowing all the stars by their names. These names had nothing in common with those adopted by the Greeks and Romans; and were often founded on reasons as fantastical as theirs. Thus they called *Ursa Major* the GREAT DOG, and the lesser Bear CHARLES'S WAIN: The three stars in the belt of Orion, FRIGGA'S DISTAFF; the Swan, THE CROSS; the Milky-way, the ROAD OF WINTER, &c. But whether they only applied their knowledge of astronomy to conduct them in their voyages, or endeavoured, like the rest of the world, to read their destiny in the stars, is a matter I am not able to decide. Their curious prying into future events by other means equally ridiculous, will not allow them to claim any merit from either their ignorance or neglect of judicial astrology. All we can say with certainty is, that they have at all times bestowed great care and attention in regulating the course of time; whether their religion, which prescribed them certain periodical sacrifices, rendered that care necessary; or whether it proceeded from that peculiar turn which the northern people have

have ever shewn for calculation and numbers *. Their year commonly commenced at the winter-solstice, and they divided it into two half years, or intervals between the two solstices †, which were again divided into quarters and months. There was great variety in the names of these months, which were borrowed generally from the rural occupations to be performed in each of them, or from the religious ceremonies which were then to be observed; these names are still in use in many places of the North ‡. The months were

* It is remarkable that the Scandinavians numbered the units up to Twelve, without stopping at Ten like all other nations. This manner of counting is preferable to ours, as Twelve is a more perfect number, and more easily broken into fractions, than Ten. The Icelanders and the peasants of certain provinces in Sweden, retain to this day a method of reckoning by Great Hundreds and Little Hundreds, Great Thousands and Little Thousands: But they seem to have confounded their ancient manner of computation with the modern, since they make their Great Hundred to consist of 10 times 12, or 120, and their Great Thousand of 1200, instead of multiplying regularly 12 by 12. (Vid.

Dal. Su. Rik. Hist. tom. i. p. 245. et Arngr. Jon. Crymog. lib. i. p. 85.) *First Edit.*

The same method of reckoning by the Great and Little Hundred still prevails among our English farmers, in their sale of cheese, &c. Their Great Hundred is 120 lb. their Little Hundred 112 lb. T.

† That is, by Summer and Winter, as we in our ordinary conversation do in England. T.

‡ Vid. Ol. Worm. Fast. Danic. passim.

Dr. HICKES, in his valuable *Theaurus Ling. Septentrion.* has given a curious list of the names of the months in all the northern languages, including those of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors. In all these languages they are very significant,

were divided into weeks of seven days, a division which hath prevailed among all the northern nations we have any knowledge of, from the extremity of Asia to that of Europe. The day was divided into twelve parts, to each of which they assigned a distinct name: but in their computation of time, they made use of the word NIGHT instead of DAY. Tacitus observes the same thing of the Germans*; and the English have still, on some occasions, the same mode of speaking†. The longest night of winter was considered in the North, as that which had produced all the rest as well as the days; hence they termed it the MOTHER-NIGHT‡, and were persuaded that on such a night the world was created. This notion certainly gave birth to the mode of expression above-related.

The

as the reader will judge from those of the Icelandic: In this, JANUARY was called *Midfuctrar-manudr*, the mid-winter month. FEBRUARY, *Fostengangs-manudr*, the fasting-procession month. MARCH, *Joffadegra manudr*, the month of equal day and night. MAY, *Fardaga-manudr*, the month of fair days. JUNE, *Nottleyfa-manudr*, the night-less month. JULY, *Madkamanudr*, the insect month. AUGUST, *Heganna-manudr*, the hay-making month. SEPTEMBER, *Ad-draata-manudr*, ... OCTOBER, *Siattrunar-manudr*, the

slaughter-month. NOVEMBER, *Rydtrydar-manudr*, ... DECEMBER, *Skamdeiges-manudr*, the month of short days. Vid. Hicke Gram. Mæse-Goth. p. 215, 216. T.

* *Nec dierum numerum ut nos, sed NOCTIUM computant. Sic constituunt, sic condicunt, nox ducere diem videtur.* Tacit. Germ. c. 11.

† Thus we say SEVEN-NIGHT, (not Seven Days,) and FORT-NIGHT, i. e. Fourteen Nights, (not Fourteen Days.) T.

‡ See above, Chap. VII, p. 130,

The necessity of assisting the memory, led them early to invent a kind of Calendars, which they called **RUNIC STAFFS**. These were a sort of compendious almanacks marked out by lines upon short pieces of board, or smooth sticks *. Some of them bear the appearance of great antiquity, but I believe there are none which do not carry evident marks that their owners were Christians. The Pagans, however, may have had instruments of this kind; which the first princes converted to Christianity might alter and adapt to the Christian rites. The Runic characters with which they are always inscribed, together with some other marks of paganism, seem to prove this: But the question cannot positively be decided 'till we have examined whether the Scandinavians were acquainted with the use of letters before they had embraced Christianity. This is a fruitful question which deserves particular discussion.

One cannot travel far in Denmark, Norway or Sweden, without meeting with great stones of different forms, engraven with those ancient characters called **RUNIC** †, which appear at first sight extremely different

* They were called in the North *Rim-stocks*, and *Prim-staffs*: they exhibited by different lines and marks, the Fasts and Festivals, the Golden Number, Dominical Letter, Epact, &c. T. † Runic inscriptions are also found in this island: See a description of a very curious one in Cumberland, and of another in Scotland, in Hickes's *Thesaur. Ling. Sept. (Gram. Island.)* Tab.

different from all we know. The few who have endeavoured to decipher them, have discovered that these inscriptions are, for the most part, only epitaphs, written in a language not less obsolete than the characters *. Several of them were undoubtedly written in Pagan times : but as a great part of them bear evident marks of Christianity; some learned men of distinction have thought that the Germans and Scandinavian missionaries first instructed their converts in the art of writing. The favourers of this opinion allege several proofs in support of it, which deserve some attention.

They produce the testimony of several Greek and Latin authors to invalidate what the northern literati have asserted concerning the great antiquity of the Runic character. Androtion, quoted by Elian †, assures us, that “ neither the Thracians, nor any other
“ of the barbarous people settled in Europe, make
“ use

VI. & p 5.) See also Gordon's *Itinerarium Septentrionale*, p. 168. There is even extant a coin of king OFFA with a Runic inscription; whence it should seem that this character had been originally used by the Saxons, as well as their Scandinavian brethren. T.

* The manner in which our author speaks of the Runic inscriptions, shews him but little acquainted with this part of his subject : the Runic characters are not

difficult to read, to those who are moderately conversant in northern antiquities ; and the language of them is no other than the ancient Icelandic, in which there are innumerable books extant in the libraries of the North. Almost all the Runic inscriptions found in the North have been published in one collection or other. T.

† *Ælian. Var. Hist. lib. viii. c. 6.* Vid. *Pelloutier Hist. des Celtes*, tom. i. ch. 10.

“ use of letters ; looking upon it as somewhat dishonourable to employ them : whereas the use of them is common among the barbarians of Asia.” Tacitus is more express on this head. “ Both the men and the women,” says he, speaking of the Germans, “ are equally ignorant of the secret of writing letters *.” Almost all the ancients who speak of the Celts, affirm the same thing. They assure us, that these people held in contempt every occupation, except that of arms ; That learning to read and write degraded a person in their eyes ; That their DRUIDS or priests, induced either by interest or superstition, and probably by both, utterly forbade them the use of letters, and encouraged them in the aversion they entertained for this admirable secret ; and that these Druids pretended their doctrines ought to be reserved for the initiated only, and concealed from all others, which could not have been, had they committed them to an indiscreet paper. They confirm all these authorities by divers facts. Thus Theodoric king of Italy could not so much as sign the first letters of his name, though he had spent his youth among the Romans. Eginhard, in his life of Charlemagne, says, that this emperor, though in other respects not unlearned, could not write, and that there were entire nations in Germany subject to him, whose laws were not yet committed to writing. The Saxons under Louis le

VOL. I.

Q q

Débonnair,

* *Litterarum secreta viri pariter ac femina ignorant.* Tac. Germ. c. 19.

Debonnair, persisting in their resolution of not learning to read, he was obliged to have the Old and New Testament turned into verse, which they willingly learned by heart, and sung after their own manner. Lastly, the literati, whose sentiments we here give, think they can unravel all the difficulty arising from the particular form of the Runic characters, and prove that these were not known in the North before Christianity, by reducing them to the Roman letters; from which, say they, these do not differ any farther than this, that the people of the North having been obliged at first to engrave them in wood and stone, found it convenient to draw their letters chiefly in strait lines, and to avoid as much as possible all round strokes and turnings*.

These

* The word RUNE seems to come from a word in the ancient Gothic language, signifying TO CUT. [So says our author; but Wormius, who was a much greater master of this subject, derives RUNE from either *Ryn* a FURROW, or *Ren* a GUTTER or CHANNEL. As these characters were first cut in wood or stone, the resemblance to a furrow or channel would easily suggest the appellation. Vid. Worm. Lit. Run. p. 2. 1636, 4to. T.]

The word *Bog Stav*, or *Buch Stav*, which is used in Germany

and the North to signify a letter, is doubtless derived from *Bog* or *Buch*, a Beech-tree, of which wood they originally made their writing tables, and from *Stav* or *Stab*, a staff or stick, because most of the letters were drawn in perpendicular lines, as it were "sticks or "staves set upright." Vid. Worm. Lit. Run. p. 6. From the same *Bog* or *Buch* the best etymologists derive the word *Box* or *Book*, which signifies a Volume not only in ours, but in all the Gothic or Teutonic languages. T.

These arguments are specious, but are they equally solid? It is true the ancients denied that the Celts in general had the knowledge, or at least the use of letters among them; but our present enquiry only regards the Scandinavians, and such of the Germans as lived nearest them. These are the only people among whom the Runic characters are found, and with them the ancients were least acquainted. As for Tacitus, he has probably been misunderstood; those who are acquainted with his style and manner, if they reconsider the passage, will not doubt but this is his meaning, that "both the German men and women were ignorant of the secret of writing letters or epistles," that is, with a view to carry on an intrigue *. What they relate of the Druids chiefly respects the Celti of Gaul, nor is it equally applicable to the other northern people. We may easily suppose there were among them many warriors and illustrious men who could not write, without concluding from thence that the whole nation was equally ignorant. As for the last argument which attributes to the first missionaries the honour of introducing letters into the North; it does not appear to me to carry much weight. The Runic characters might possibly be borrowed from the Roman alphabet, without any necessary conclusion that the Scandinavians had waited for the secret till the introduction of Christianity among them. The Runic
letters

* So the best translators of Tacitus, and so the Abbé BLETTERIE has rendered this passage in his celebrated French version.

letters might even have a great resemblance to the Roman without being copied from them, since both may have been derived from one common original. But the strongest argument of all is, that this resemblance has been nothing less than proved; for that the difference between the Runic and Roman letters is all owing to the necessity of writing on wood or stone, and of tracing the letters in perpendicular lines, leaves such a latitude for changing, adding or diminishing, that there are few alphabets in the world, which by means of such a commodious hypothesis, might not easily be reduced to the Roman character. Accordingly the learned Wormius found the Runic letters as easily reducible to the Greek and Hebrew alphabets as to the Roman*.

We have hitherto only proposed doubts: Let us now see if we can ascertain some truths. The Roman history tells us, that under the reign of the Emperor Valens, ULPHILAS †, bishop of those Goths who were settled

* Vid. Ol. Worm. Literatur. Runic. passim. — [M. Pelloutier cites in the first volume of his *Hist. des Celtes*, a manuscript Dissertation, the author of which (MR CELSIUS, a learned Swede) hath reduced the Runic to Roman characters. I have read this Dissertation very carefully: it contains many ingenious conjectures, but they appear to me to be nothing but conjectures. *First Edit.*]

It was that great master of northern literature, Dr. HICKES, who first started the notion that the Runic character was borrowed from the Roman: See his *Thesaurus Linguar. Septentrion.* &c. But this opinion is now generally given up as unsupportable. T.

† In the year 369. Vid. Socrat. Hist. Eccles. lib. iv. and Sozomen. lib. vi. 36.

In the following account of ULPHILAS

fettled in Mœsia and Thrace, translated the Bible into the Gothic language. But we know from other authorities,

PHILAS and the GOTHIC letters, our ingenious author has committed several mistakes; occasioned by his too closely following WORMIUS in his *Literatur. Run.* not considering that since the time of Wormius some very important discoveries have been made, and great light thrown upon this subject.

When WORMIUS wrote, the translation of Ulphilas was supposed to be irrecoverably lost, and therefore Wormius having nothing to guide him but conjecture, supposed the Runic character and that of Ulphilas to be the same.—But some years after, there was found in the abbey of Werden in Westphalia, a very curious fragment of what is believed to have been the identical version of ULPHILAS; written in the language of the Mœse-Goths, and exhibiting the characters which that prelate made use of: These are so very remote from the Runic, that we may now safely allow the Gothic Bishop the

honour of their invention, without in the least derogating from the antiquity of the Runic letters.

This fragment is now preserved in the library at UPSAL in Sweden, and is famous among all the northern literati, under the name of the *Codex argenteus*, or Silver Book: for which reason a short account of it may not be unacceptable.

The *Codex argenteus* contains at present only the four Gospels, though somewhat mutilated; and is believed to be a relic of the Gothic Bible, all or the greater part of which Ulphilas had translated. The leaves are of vellum of a violet colour; all the letters are of silver, except the initials, which are of gold. These letters (which are all capitals) appear not to have been written with the pen, but stamped or imprinted on the vellum with hot metal types*, in the same manner as the book-binders at present letter the backs of books. This copy is judged to be near as ancient as the time of Ulphilas, or
at

* See this fully proved in some curious Tracts written by the learned Dom. JOHAN. IHRE, NATH. THENSTADT, G. F. EUPELIUS, and other Swedish Literati.

thorities, that the character in which this version was written, was either Runic, or one nearly resembling it. Several authors say, that Ulphilas invented it; but

at least not later than a century or two after; yet so near was the copyist to the discovery of printing, that if he had but thought of combining three or four of these letters together, he must have hit upon that admirable invention; whereas he only imprinted each letter singly*.—This curious fragment has been several times printed in 4to, first by Junius in 1665; and lately in a very elegant manner at Oxford by the learned Mr Lye in 1750. Another fragment of this curious version (containing part of the Epistle to the Romans) has been since discovered in the library at Wolfenbottle, and was published a few years ago in a very splendid volume in 4to by the Rev. F. A. Knitell, arch-deacon of Wolfenbottle.

It must not be concealed that Mr Michaelis, and one or two other learned men† have opposed the current opinion, that the Silver Book contains part of Ulphilas's Gothic version; and have offered arguments to prove that it

is rather a venerable fragment of some very ancient Francic Bible: but they have been confuted by M. Knitell and others; and the Gothic claim has been further confirmed by a curious relic of the same language lately discovered in Italy, plainly written by one of the same Goths, being evidently of their time. The explanation of this we owe to the reverend Mr Lye: See his Notes on the Gothic Gospels, &c.

To conclude: The letters used in the Gothic Gospels, being 25 in number, are formed with slight variations from the capitals of the Greek and Latin alphabet, and are extremely different from the Runic. The invention of them may therefore be very safely attributed to Bishop ULPHILAS (as the ancients expressly assert,) who might not chuse to employ in so sacred a work as the translation of the Bible, the RUNIC characters, which the Goths had rendered infamous by their superstitious use of them. T.

* Mr Coxe, however, is of opinion that the letters are "drawn or painted." See *Travels into Sweden. Ed. of this Edit.*

† See Chamberlayn's "*Oratio Dominica, &c.*" Amst. 1714. 4to.

but is it probable that any man should form a new alphabet for a nation which had one already? If the Goths of Mœsia and Thrace had not before his time had any knowledge of letters, would it not have been better to have taught them the use of the Greek character, already understood? Besides, Ulphilas neither wrote the Gospels on wood nor on stone, but on parchment; he would not therefore be under the necessity of disfiguring the alphabet of other nations for the sake of strait lines, which it is alledged gave birth to the Runic letters. At most it could not be the Roman alphabet that was altered; but if any, it must have been the Greek, for Ulphilas was at that time in a country where the Greek language was spoken. Nor is it difficult to discover what it was that led historians into the mistake of supposing Ulphilas to have been the inventor of these characters. The Greeks had probably never heard any mention of them before he came among them: The introducer of a novelty easily passes for the author of it; and when we compare the Runic letters, taken from the inscriptions scattered up and down on the rocks in the North, with the alphabet of Ulphilas, it is easy to see that the bishop has added diverse characters unknown to the ancient Scandinavians. - It was doubtless the translation of the Bible which obliged him to make these additions. The ancient alphabet being composed only of sixteen letters *, could not express many sounds

* Verel. Runogr. Scand. cap. vii.

sounds foreign to the Gothic language, that necessarily occurred in that work. These additional letters might easily confer on Ulphilas the credit of inventing the whole. This is one of those inaccuracies which every day happen. It is no less probable that before Ulphilas, the Goths, even while they were involved in the thickest darkness of paganism, had some knowledge of letters *.

What are we to think of those inscriptions in the Runic character, which travellers assure us they have seen in the deserts of Tartary†? Tartary has never yet been converted to Christianity; from this and the circumjacent countries issued those swarms which peopled Scandinavia; nor have the Scandinavians ever made any expedition into their mother country since they embraced the Christian faith. If then the account given us by these travellers is true, we must necessarily conclude that the Runic writing was an art which had its rise in Asia, and was carried into Europe by the colonies who came to settle in the North. This is also confirmed by all the old chronicles

* An evident proof that the Runic were not imitated from the Roman letters, arises not only from their form which have so little resemblance to these, but from their number, (being but sixteen,) and their order and names, which have nothing in common with the ROMAN, GREEK, or GOTHIC characters of Ulphilas. *See the plate.*

† Consult Strahlenberg's Description of the northern and eastern parts of Europe and Asia, [quoted by Er. Benzel. Jun. in Pericul. Runic. Diss. Upsal. 1724.] See also in the same book the map of Tartary. *First Edit.*

cles and poems which I have so often quoted. They universally agree in assigning to the Runic characters a very remote antiquity, and an origin entirely pagan. They attribute the invention of them to Odin himself; who, they add, was eminently skilled in the art of writing as well for the common purposes of life, as for the operations of magic *. Many of these letters even bore the names of the Gods his companions. In a very ancient ode, quoted by Bartholin, the poet thus speaks of the Runic characters †: “The letters which the Great Ancient traced out: which the Gods composed: which Odin the sovereign of the Gods engraved.” Had it been otherwise, how could the pagans have so soon forgotten that these letters were introduced among them by the ministers of a religion that was foreign, unknown, and must have been hateful to them, since they were often compelled by violent means to profess it? How could all their poets (who were at the same time their theologians) so expressly call Odin, “The inventor of the RUNES?” But lastly, what appears to be of great weight, is, that our histories often make mention of princes and pagan heroes who made use of this character in an age when, in all probability, Christianity had not penetrated so far into the North ‡. In Blekingia, a

VOL. I.

R r

province

* Edda Island. et Barthol p. mort. p. 647.

649.

† Venantius Fortunatus, a La-

† Vid. Barthol. de Causis cont. tin poet, who wrote about the beginning

province of Sweden, there is a road cut through a rock, on which are various Runic characters, said to have been engraved there by king HAROLD HYLDE-TAND in honour of his father. Saxo, who lived under Valdemar II. * relates, that this prince sent people thither to examine them, and that tradition attributed them to that king Harold who, according to Torfæus, ascended the throne about the beginning of the seventh century. The same author assures us that Regner Lodbrog used Runic letters to record his exploits in Biarmaland †. Instances of the same kind are found in almost every page of the ancient chronicles, and of Torfæus's history of Norway.

We may then fairly conclude, that it was Odin himself that introduced the Runic characters into the North. Almost all the Asiatic nations had long before his time been acquainted with letters, and this prince's native country could not be far distant from many of those people among whom they had been long

ginning of the sixth century, speaks in one of his epigrams addressed even then of the Runic characters to Flavius. Lib. vii. Epig. 18.

Barbara fraxineis pingatur RUNA tabellis

Quodque Papyrus agit Virgula plana valet.

i. e. The Barbarians engrave their to A. D. 1241. See Sax. Gram. in Runic characters on ashen tablets, Præfat. and the Notes of Steph. which serve them instead of paper. Vid. Wormii Literat. Runic. Stephan. on that passage. † A province in the north part of Russia. Vid. Sax. Grammat. lib. p. 7.

* He reigned from A. D. 1202, ix.

long familiar. Nor is it improbable but that an ambitious leader might avail himself of them, to acquire respect from the rude uncivilized inhabitants of Scandinavia. The art of writing being of such infinite and wonderful use, might easily persuade them that there was something divine or magical in it. Accordingly we see them more frequently employ it for the foolish purpose of working prodigies, than to assist the memory and render words fixed and permanent.

This would be the place to say something of those superstitious practices, if we had not already given sufficient instances of the weakness of the human mind, and of the strange errors and extravagances to which ignorant nations are subject. Let it suffice then just to observe, that the Runic characters were distinguished into various kinds *. The NOXIOUS, or as they called them, the BITTER RUNES, were employed to bring various evils on their enemies: the FAVOURABLE averted misfortunes: the VICTORIOUS procured conquest to those who used them: the MEDICINAL were inscribed on the leaves of trees for healing: others served to dispel melancholy thoughts; to prevent shipwreck: were antidotes against poison; preservatives against the resentment of their enemies, and efficacious to render a mistress favourable: These last were to be used with great caution. If an ignorant person had chanced to write one letter for another, or had

* Vid. Worm. Litterat. Runic. p. 33. et Barthol. de Cauf. &c. p. 650.

had but erred in the minutest stroke, he would have exposed his mistress to some dangerous illness; which was only to be cured by writing other RUNES with the greatest niceness. All these various kinds differed only in the ceremonies observed in writing them, in the materials on which they were written, in the place where they were exposed, in the manner in which the lines were drawn, whether in the form of a circle, of a serpent, or a triangle, &c. In the strict observance of these childish particulars consisted that obscure and ridiculous art, which acquired to so many weak and wicked persons, the respectable name of Priests and Prophetesses, merely for filling rude minds with jealousy, fear and hatred *.

However,

* It is by mischievous errors of the same kind that all nations have been distinguished in their first ages of simplicity and ignorance; those first ages which prejudice makes us regret, and wish that the arts had never corrupted their primeval innocence. Whereas in proportion as the empire of the Sciences hath prevailed in the North, that of Superstition hath faded and vanished before its growing light. But the extremity of Scandinavia, where that light hath not yet penetrated, still remains faithfully subject to all its ancient errors. Allowing for the difference of their climate and poverty, the Laplanders at present are in this respect what the Scandinavians were formerly. With the same ignorance, they are equally subject to superstition and credulity; for it is a certain rule that Magic never fails to work prodigies in all such nations as believe in it. The Ostiaks and other savages of Asia are no less given to sorcery and witchcraft than the Laplanders; and we have all heard of the JONGLEURS, those magicians so revered among the Barbarians of America. *First Edit.*

However, the use of letters for more rational purposes became by degrees more common in the North. In the latter ages of paganism, we frequently meet with princes and famous leaders, and in general all persons whose rank entitled them to a careful education, writing epistles, epitaphs and inscriptions of various kinds *. The older these inscriptions are, the better they are engraven. We rarely find them written from the right hand to the left †: but it is not uncommon to meet with the line running from the top to the bottom after the manner of the Chinese and several nations of India; or from the top to the bottom, and then turning round to the left, and so up again to the place it begins at; or else from the left to the right, and so back to the left again, which was the manner of the early Greeks, and had its name from the resemblance to a furrow traced by the plough ‡. The greater part of the ancient monuments written in the Runic character, which are still preserved, are inscriptions dispersed here and there in the fields §, and cut out on large stones or pieces of rock. The Scandinavians wrote also on wood, on the bark of the birch-tree, and on prepared skins. When they had occasion to impart any matter to an absent person, they dispatched a messenger with a bit of bark, or a small

* Vid. Ver. Runograph. Scand.
p. 21.

† Вруговрѣвъ.

‡ Vid. Worm. Litterar. Run.
cap. xxv.

§ They are also often found in churches, and sometimes in other buildings. T.

small polished piece of wood, on which they commonly expressed their meaning with much exactness. There are still extant some of these epistles, and even love-letters written on these pieces of bark and bits of wood *. As for books composed in the Runic character, the most ancient we can find, appear to have been written about the time that Christianity took place in the North, as is judged from several proofs, particularly from the frequent intermixture of Roman letters in them. In the tenth and eleventh centuries, the Runic gave way still more and more to the other. Till at length the missionaries succeeded in totally abolishing the use of them, as tending to retain the people in their ancient superstitions. But this reformation did not speedily take place, and there remained traces of this character for many succeeding ages ; nor, as we are assured †, is it yet wholly laid aside among the mountaineers of one province in Sweden.

I shall avoid entering into the disputes which have
been

* Renhielm, a learned Swede, in his Notes upon the Icelandic chronicle, intitled "Torstein's Wik Saga," p. 35, cites an ancient billet-doux, containing only these words, "I should love better, young maid, to repose on thy bosom, than to possess the riches of the three Indies," Olaus Wormius also tells us, that he had one in his cabinet of curiosities which was writ upon little tables of wood, but he hath not thought proper to translate it. *First Edit.*

† See Dalin. *Su Rik. hist. tom. i. p. 237.* and Benzell *collected. hist. p. i. cap. 1.*

been raised on the subject of the ancient northern tongues : For, however the research may have been heretofore carried on with much gravity, it was in reality very trifling *, nor is it a trifle of that kind which serves to interest or amuse the world at present. Let it suffice to remark, that from the result of the whole, it appears, that all Europe at first spoke the same language, excepting the SARMATIANS, who from the earliest time had one peculiar to themselves ; [*the IBERI or CANTABRI, progenitors of the Hiberni and Cambri ;*] the GREEKS who borrowed many of their terms from Egypt and the East ; and the ROMANS who in part adopted the language of Greece. This ancient language of the northern and western parts of Europe has only been preserved in those countries, which the Romans never conquered ; although evident traces of it are still visible in others that were long subject to their dominion. The Spanish and French tongues abound with words which we find still extant in the Teutonic ; some of them, such as the Romans could not obliterate, and many others introduced by the frequent migrations from the North. . . . That tongue is still spoken in Iceland and in some mountainous provinces of Sweden. The Danish, the Norwegian, and the Swedish are evidently the same, and are very like the German, especially the

Low

* M. Mallet alludes to the question, " Whether the Teutonic language was propagated from Germany northward to Scandinavia ; or, from Scandinavia southward to Germany ?" Ed.

Low Dutch. It seems as if the foreign colonies under the conduct of Odin, who settled in Scandinavia and the North of Germany, had only introduced a softer pronunciation, a very few new words, and some small difference in the terminations.

After what we have seen of the character and manners of the Scandinavians, we cannot form any very high idea of their language. As men only invent terms in proportion as they acquire ideas, language must of course have been at first very poor and undorned, not at all expressive of a variety of abstract notions; but among a free, independent and warlike people, it must have borrowed its colourings from the genius of the speakers *. There is always something to be admired in the language of a free people, however gross and ignorant they may be in other respects: Such a language has always an energetic brevity, lively and sententious turns, and picturesque expressions, which the constraint of our education, the fear of ridicule, and the dominion of fashion render the modern tongues incapable of retaining. But what must have contributed still further to give strength and sublimity to that of the ancient Scandinavians, was their general and distinguished taste for poetry. This is a subject

* " Nations, like single men, " symbol must of course correspond to its arche-type. " *ἡθεὺς* " have their peculiar ideas; these " peculiar ideas become the geni- " *χαρὰν ἵπαι τ' ἀνθρώπων λόγους.*" " us of their language, since the HERMES. p. 407. T.

subject so interesting, as to deserve to be treated with particular attention.

MANKIND, every where essentially the same, have been always led to poetical composition, prior to that of prose. This seems, at present, the reverse of the natural order; but we think so either through our prejudices or for want of putting ourselves in the place of a people who are ignorant of the art of writing. Pleasing sounds, and the attractions of harmony would strike at first every ear; but song could not long subsist without poetry. No sooner was it observed how these two united powers fixed and impressed those images on the mind, which the memory was desirous of retaining; than they acquired a new degree of esteem, especially among such as aspired to a lasting fame. Verse was made use of to preserve the memory of remarkable events and great actions. The laws of a people, their religious ceremonies and rural labours were also recorded in numbers, because these are subjects which, consisting of a great variety of particulars, might easily fall into oblivion. Hence it was that Greece could already boast of an Homer, an Hesiod, and of many other poets, several ages before PHERECYDES * had written in prose. Hence among the Gauls and other Celtic nations, there were poems composed on all subjects from the earliest ages,

VOL. I.

Ss

which

* He lived 600 years after the taking of Troy; whereas there were poets previous to that famous expedition.

which the Druids, who were appointed to educate the youth, frequently employed twenty years in teaching them to repeat *. This custom, rendered sacred by its high antiquity, which ever commands respect from the people, was in force many ages after the art of writing had pointed out a more perfect method of preserving the memorials of human knowledge. In like manner the Scandinavians for a long time applied their Runic letters only to the senseless purposes above-mentioned ; nor did they during so many years ever think of committing to writing those verses with which their memories were loaded ; and it is probable that they only wrote down a small quantity of them at last. The idea of making a book never entered into the heads of those fierce warriors, who knew no medium between the violent exercises and fatigues of war, or hunting, and a stupid lethargic state of inaction. Among the innumerable advantages, which accrued to the northern nations from the introduction of the Christian religion, that of teaching them to apply the knowledge of letters to useful purposes, is not the least valuable. Nor could a motive less sacred have eradicated that habitual and barbarous prejudice, which caused them to neglect so admirable a secret. The churches and monasteries were at least so many asylums where this secret was preserved, while the ferocity of manners which prevailed in the dark ages, tended again to consign it to oblivion.

The

* Cæsar. Comment. lib. vi. 14.

The theological disputes between the different sects had this good effect, that they obliged them to consult many ancient books, and to compose new ones. The Celtic religion, on the contrary, by relying on poetry and tradition for the preservation of its tenets, and in a manner forbidding the use of writing, lest they should be divulged, must needs extend the empire of barbarism and ignorance.

So long as that religion prevailed in the North, the use of letters being very limited ; it is no paradox to say that verse was a necessary medium of knowledge, and the poet an essential officer of the state. And if it requires a peculiar and uncommon genius to excel in this art, the professors of it would of course acquire a very high degree of esteem and respect. All the historical monuments of the North are full of the honours paid this order of men both by princes and people ; nor can the annals of poetry produce any age or country which reflects more glory and lustre upon it. The ancient chronicles constantly represent the kings of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden as attended by one or more SCALDS * ; for this was the name they gave their poets. They were more especially honoured and caressed at the courts of those princes, who distinguished themselves by their great actions and passion for glory. HAROLD HARFAGRE, for instance, placed

* The word SCALD is judged by Torfæus to have signified originally " a smother and polisher of language." Vide Torfæi Præfat. ad Orcades, folio. T.

placed them at his feasts above all the other officers of his court*. Many princes entrusted them both in peace and war with commissions of the utmost importance. They never set out on any considerable expedition without some of them in their train. HAGON, earl of Norway, had five celebrated poets along with him in that famous battle of which I have spoken, when the warriors of Jomsburg were defeated; and history records that they sung each an ode to animate the soldiers before they engaged†. But they enjoyed another advantage, which would be more the envy of the poets of these days. They were rewarded for the poems they composed in honour of the kings and heroes, with magnificent presents. We never find the SCALD singing his verses at the courts of princes without being recompensed with golden rings, glittering arms, and rich apparel. Their respect for this order of men often extended so far as to remit the punishment of crimes they had committed, on condition they sued out their pardon in verse; and we have still extant an ode, by which EGILL, a celebrated poet,

* Vid. Hist. Norveg. vol. II. p. 21. Bartholin. *Caus. Contempt. a Dan. Mortis*, p. 166.

† See Torf. Bartholin, p. 172. who produces other instances to the same purpose: particularly that of OLAVE king of Norway, who placed three of his SCALDS about him to be eye witnesses of

his exploits, (as described by our author below): these bards composed each of them a song on the spot, which Bartholin has printed and accompanied with a Latin version. Other songs of the same kind may be found in the same author. T.

et, atoned for a murder he had been guilty of *. In a word, the poetic art was held in such high estimation, that great lords, and even kings did not disdain to cultivate it with the utmost pains themselves. RÖGVALD, earl of the Orkney islands, passed for a very able poet ; he boasts himself, in a song of his which is still extant, that he knew how to compose verses on all subjects †. King REGNER was no less distinguished for his skill in poetry, than in war and navigation. Many of his poems were long preserved in the North, and may be found inserted in the history of his life : and it is well known that he died no less like a poet than an hero.

The respect, however, which the northern nations paid to their SCALDS was not owing to the nobility of their extraction. A people whose object was glory, could not fail of showing a great deference to those who both published it abroad, and consigned it to futurity, let their original be what it would. A prince or illustrious warrior oftentimes exposed his life with so much intrepidity only to be praised by his Scald, who was both the witness and judge of his bravery.

It

* EGILL had even killed the son of that prince, who remitted his punishment : This was Eric Blodex king of Norway. The reader may see an English version of the poem EGILL composed on this occasion, together with the original, in " Five Pieces of Runic Poetry, translated from the Icelandic language," 1763, [subjoined to the Second Volume of this edition.] T.
 † Vid. Worm. Litter. Runic. p. 195.

It is affirmed that this kind of men, although poets, were never guilty of flattery, and never lavished their praises on heroes and kings themselves unless their gallant exploits were quite incontestible *. Hence arose the custom of always bringing them into the scene of action: OLAVE king of Norway placing three of them one day around him in battle, cried out with spirit, " You shall not relate what you have only heard, but what you are eye-witnesses of yourselves †." The same poets usually sung their verses themselves at solemn festivals and in great assemblies, to the sound of the flute or harp ‡. But the subject of these poems was not confined to one single event, such as a victory or some generous action; it was frequently a genealogical history of all the kings of the country, deduced down from the Gods to the reigning prince, who always derived his origin from them. These poems were, according to Tacitus, the only annals of the Germans § : They had great numbers of them, which were not wholly forgotten in the eighth century; since Eginhard relates, that CHARLEMAGNE caused them to be committed to writing — " And even learnt himself," adds the historian, " the
" rude

* Vid Bartholin. p. 154. et cap. 10 lib. i. passim. T.

† Stephan in not. ad Saxon. p. 12.

‡ Vid. Olaf. Saga ap. Verel. ad Herv. Sag. p. 178. Bartholin. Cauf. Contemp. a Dan. &c. p. 172.

§ *Gelebrant carminibus antiquis (quod unum apud illos memoriae et annalium genus est) tuifsonem, &c. Tac. Germ. c. 10. T.*

“ rude and ancient songs in which the exploits and the wars of the first princes were celebrated.” In poems of the same kind consisted for many ages all the history of the Scandinavians. A bard named THIODOLFE, celebrated in his verses the exploits of Harold and thirty of his predecessors ; another called EYVIND, composed an historical poem which went back as far as Odin. Such are the sources whence Saxo drew his materials for the first six or seven books of his history ; and he might doubtless have derived great assistance from them, if he had not happened to live in an age wholly destitute of that exact skill in criticism, which knows how to separate facts from the fictions with which they are blended.

The necessity there was for poets, the natural attractions of the art itself, and those it derived from the manners of the age, greatly multiplied the number of SCALDS. An ancient Icelandic manuscript has preserved a list of all such as distinguished themselves in the three northern kingdoms, from the reign of Regner Lodbrog to that of Valdemar II. *. They are in number two hundred and thirty, among whom we find more than one crowned head. But what is not less remarkable is, that the greatest part of them are natives of Iceland. The reader has doubtless by this time observed that we are indebted to that island for almost all the historical monuments of the northern nations

* Viz. from A. D. 750, to 1157.—Vide SCALDATAL in Append. ad Lit. Run. Ol. Worm. p. 242.

nations now remaining. It cannot easily be accounted for how it came to pass, that a people disjoined from the rest of the world, few in number, depressed by poverty, and situated in so unfavourable a climate, should be capable in those dark ages, of manifesting such a taste for literature, and should even rise to the perception of the more refined mental pleasures.— While they were heathens, the Icelandic annalists were always deemed the best in the North. After they had embraced the Christian faith, they were the first who thought of unravelling the chaos of ancient history, who collected the old poems, digested the chronicles into a regular form, and applied themselves to rescue from oblivion the traditions of their pagan theology. Were we better informed of certain particulars relating to the state of the North during those remote ages, we might possibly find the cause of this phenomenon either in the poverty of the inhabitants of Iceland, which drove them to seek their fortunes at the neighbouring courts : Or in the success of their first bards, which excited their emulation, and at the same time prepossessed strangers in their favour : Or lastly, in the nature of their republican government, in which the talent of oratory, and the reputation of superior sense and capacity are the direct roads to respect and preferment.

The style of these ancient poems is very enigmatical and figurative, very remote from the common language, and for that reason, grand, but tumid ; sublime, but obscure. If it be the character of poetry to have
nothing

nothing in common with prose, if the language of the Gods ought to be quite different from that of men, if every thing should be expressed by imagery, figures, hyperboles, and allegories, the Scandinavians may rank in the highest class of poets : Nor is this unaccountable. The soaring flights of fancy may possibly more peculiarly belong to a rude and uncultivated, than to a civilized people. The great objects of nature strike more forcibly on rude imaginations. Their passions are not impaired by the constraint of laws and education. The paucity of their ideas, and the barrenness of their language oblige them to borrow from all nature, images fit to cloath their conceptions in. How should abstract terms and reflex ideas, which so much enervate our poetry, be found in theirs? They could seldom have been met with in their most familiar conversations. The moment the soul, reflecting on its own operations recurs inwards, and detaches itself from exterior objects, the imagination loses its energy, the passions their activity, the mind becomes severe, and requires ideas rather than sensations ; language then becomes precise and cautious, and poetry being no longer the child of pure passion, is able to affect but feebly. If it be asked, what is become of that magic power which the ancients attributed to this art? It may be well said to exist no more. The poetry of the modern languages is nothing more than reasoning in rhyme, addressed to the understanding, but very little to the heart. No longer essentially connected with religion, politics or morali-

ty, it is at present, if I may so say, a mere private art, an amusement that attains its end when it hath gained the cold approbation of a few select judges.

The most affecting and most striking passages in the ancient northern poetry, were such as now seem to us the most whimsical, unintelligible and overstrained : so different are our modes of thinking from theirs. We can admit of nothing but what is accurate and perspicuous. They only required bold and astonishing images which appear to us hyperbolical and gigantic. What also contributes to render their poetry very obscure at present, is that the language of it is borrowed from their mythology ; a mythology not so familiar to us as that of the Greeks and Romans. When they did not allude to their own fables, they took their metaphors from other subjects, which were commonly very far-fetched and remote : Thus a poet seldom expressed heaven by any other term than “ the scull of the giant Ymer,” alluding to a fable on that subject. The rain-bow was called “ the bridge of the Gods :” Gold was “ The tears of Freya :” Poetry, “ the present, or the drink of Odin.” The earth was either indifferently “ the spouse of Odin, “ The flesh of Ymer, The daughter of the night, “ The vessel which floats on the ages, or The foundation of the air :” Herbs and plants were called, “ the hair or the fleece of the earth.” A combat was termed “ a bath of blood, The hail of Odin, The shock of bucklers :” The sea was “ the field of pirates, and the girdle of the earth :” Ice, “ the greatest

“ greatest of all bridges :” A ship, “ the horse of the waves :” The tongue, “ The sword of words,” &c. Each of their deities might be expressed by an infinite variety of phrases. In short, a peculiar study of this kind of language was necessary to constitute a poet ; for which reason they early composed a dictionary of it for the use as well of the Scalds, as their readers. The same Rogvald, earl of the Orkneys, before spoken of, is said to have composed a work of this sort, which, according to Wormius, is still extant, under the name of THE POETICAL KEY *. Another is found at the end of the Icelandic EDDA, and is intitled SCALDA, or, The art of Poetry. This is a collection of epithets and synonymous words selected from their best poets, very like those which are put into the hands of young people when they first apply themselves to Latin poetry.

Yet they sometimes composed verses in a more simple stile, and nearer approaching to common language ; but this only happened when in conversation a Scald, either to shew his happy talent, or to do more honour to the person with whom he conversed, answered in extemporary metre. This singular mode of expressing

* Vid. Worm. Litter. Runic. p. 193. — Rogvaldus Orcadum comes, princeps egregius, inter alias nobiles dotes, quibus ornatus est, præstantissimus et promptissimus fuit Rhythmistæ, et CLAVEM RHYTHMICAM, quæ adhuc extat, confecisse dicitur.

Habuit etiam ille in Palestinam navigans itæriæ comes Rhythmistæ duos Islandos, qui una cum ipso res quotidie gestas rhythmis comprehendunt, et magna apud illum in estimatione fuerunt. T.

sing themselves was very common among the ancient Scandinavians, and proves in what degree of esteem this people held the art of poetry. The chronicles have preserved a great number of such conversations in verse; and there is reason to believe that these poems, which might be sung at first, and easily committed to memory, were oftentimes the text of which succeeding chronicles were nothing more than commentaries or expositions. There is no appearance that the verses were composed by the authors of those histories: They are never assigned to any but the SCALDS by profession; and are quoted by the historians as their proofs and vouchers: And besides it is known to have been usual with the Scalds to interlard their discourse with extemporary verses. There are to this day, both in the North, in Italy, and in other countries, many famous composers of *impromptu's*. Thus it is reported of an Icelandic bard, named SIVARD*, that when he spoke in prose, his tongue seemed embarrassed, and to deliver his thoughts with difficulty, but that he expressed himself in verse with the greatest fluency and ease. The historians frequently and positively assure us that these verses were spoken off-hand. This is what is remarked in the life of the poet EGILL, for instance, who purchased his pardon from the king of Norway by singing an extemporary ode which still remains, and is intitled THE RANSOM

OF

* Vid. Olav. in Epist. apud Worm. Litter. Runic.

OF EGILL *. The same elogium is often given to another more ancient Scald, called EYVIND, and furnamed from his superior talents, "The cross of the poets." All the chronicles mention his great facility in composing verses, as a matter well known throughout the North.

We must not however infer, that these poets were wholly unconfined by rules, or that even they were not under very severe ones: it is true, if we may credit Wormius, they were ignorant of the shackles of rhyme, which have so long galled modern poets †. But possibly this learned man should rather have said, that the old northern poets did not always make use of rhyme; for he even quotes, in the same treatise, ancient poems which are not only in rhyme, but even rhimed

* Vid. Torf. H. N. tom. 5. p. 188. et seq.

† By way of Appendix to his LITERATURA RUNICA, Wormius has given some of the laws of the ancient Runic Poetry communicated to him by a friend: One of these is, "*Rhythmorum veterum infinita fere sunt genera, vulgo tamen uſtatorum centum triginta ſex eſſe putantur*:" the author adds by way of corollary . . . *Nec inter hæc recenscebatur illud genus quo jam ludunt noſtrates, totum artifiſcium in epigrammaticis ponentes*. Meaning only that there were 136 ſorts of

metre, without including rhyme; for he afterwards gives a long poem all in rhyme. But the publisher having inadvertently added in the margin (by way of giving the contents of the paragraph) *Modernum Rhythmi genus veteribus incognitum*; superficial Readers have been led into the miſtake, that Rhyme was wholly unknown to the northern SCALDS, and by parity of reaſon to all the Gothic poets; whereas it was undoubtedly from theſe that this modern ornament of verſe derived its origin and uſe. T.

rhimed with the utmost exactness *. BARTHOLIN has also given us two little songs in rhyme, which seem to be older than the tenth century †. It is probable that many more of the same age, are either totally lost or concealed in manuscripts which I am unacquainted with. Since that time the poets have more and more run into the use of rhyme. We find in the collection of ancient monuments, published by Mr. Biorner, a pretty long poem, which, according to that author, was writ in the twelfth or thirteenth century; this poem is not only most exactly and uniformly in rhyme;

* This is the famous Ode of E- rhymes. Take a stanza by way of
OILL, mentioned above; which is specimen :
not only in single, but double

*Raud bilmen bior
That var brafn-agior
Fleinn bitte fior
Flugn dreyrug spior
Ol Flagd gota
Tharbiotur skota
Thrad nift NARA
Nattuerd ara.*

i. e. "The king dyed his sword in " on the foe : she trampled on the
" crimson ; his sword that glutted " evening food of the eagle." See
" the hungry ravens. The wea- Five Pieces of Runic Poetry, (*sub-*
" pon aimed at human life. The joined), Olaf Worm. Literatur.
" bloody lances flew. The com- Runic. p. 232. T.
" mander of the Scottish fleet fed † Vid. Olaf Tryggveson. Saga
" fat the birds of prey. The sis- apud Bartholin. Cauf. contemp.
" ter of NARA [Death] trampled a Dan. mortis, p. 81, et p. 489.

rhime, but the measure seems to be much like what we (the French) call heroic or Alexandrine verse. Some people have advanced that rhyme is of a very ancient date among the Celtic nations; but it is difficult to give very solid proofs of this: it is, however, likely enough, if we reflect that the Scandinavians* were long acquainted with it, and that there is no kind of harmony or cadence more simple or more likely to catch the ear.

It is not easy to discover wherein consisted the mechanism and harmony of those ancient verses which were not in rhyme. The learned who have made the northern languages their study, fancy they discover in some of them the Saphic measure, which many Greek lyric poets, and Horace in Latin so frequently chose†. In others the poet seems to have tied himself

* This is true, supposing the Scandinavians were a branch of the Celtes: One may however infer, from its being used among those northern tribes, that it early prevailed among the other Gothic nations. T.

† Dalin. Suea. Rik. Hist. lib. viii.—[This resemblance to the Saphic measure, will, I am afraid, be found only imaginary. It may with more certainty be affirmed that the vast variety of metre used by the ancient SEALDS may

chiefly, if not altogether, be reduced to different kinds of Alliteration. In Wormius we have an exact analysis of one of these sorts of metre: in which it was requisite that the stanza or strophe should consist of four distichs, and each verse of six syllables. In each distich three words at least were required to begin with the same letters, (that is, two words in one verse, and one in the other), that there should, besides this, be two correspondent syllables in each verse,

self up to begin the two first lines of each strophe with the same letters, and to confine his verse within six syllables.

verse, and that none of the correspondences ought immediately to follow each other, &c. as in the following Latin couplet:

*ChriSTus Caput noSTRum
CorONat te bONis.*

This appears to us at present, to be only a very laborious way of trifling; however, we ought not to decide too hastily: every language has its own peculiar laws of harmony; and as the ancient Greeks and Romans formed their metre of certain artful distributions of their long and short syllables: so the northern Scalds placed the structure of theirs in the studied repetition and adaptation of the vowels and consonants. — The same mode of versification was admired by our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, and hath not wholly been laid aside much more than two centuries among our English poets; see “Reliques of ancient English poetry,” Vol. II. p. 260. — It may not be amiss to add, that the metre of the WELSH bards is altogether of the alliterative kind, and full as artificial as that of the ancient Scandinavians: Yet those who thoroughly understand that

language, assert that this kind of metre is extremely pleasing to the ear, and does not subject the poet to more restraint than the different sorts of feet did the Greek and Roman poets.

Perhaps it will not be difficult to find the difference between the metre of the ancient Classics, and that of the Gothic and Celtic bards, in the different genius of their respective languages. The Greek and Latin tongues chiefly consisted of polysyllables, of words ending with vowels, and not overburdened with consonants: their poets, therefore, (if they would produce harmony), could not but make their metre to consist in quantity, or the artful disposal of the long and short syllables; whereas the old Celtic and Teutonic languages being chiefly composed of monosyllables, could have had hardly any such thing as quantity, and on the other hand a bounding

syllables. Others think they observe that the initial letters of the lines correspond in many different respects, either in the same or in different strophes. The most skilful investigators of this subject assure us, that the poets perpetually invented new measures, and reckon up one hundred and thirty-six kinds *. The explication of them we must leave to the assiduity of those who have reckoned them up.

This taste for the abstruse and complicated, could not fail of running them into allegories and enigmas of every kind: We often meet with princes and great warriors in the ancient chronicles, proposing riddles, and affixing penalties on such as could not unravel them. In the first interview king Regner had with the beautiful shepherdes before-mentioned, he tried by enigmas to discover whether her wit was answerable to her beauty. Another king, named ERIC, rendered himself famous for being able to give immediate answers to thirty riddles, which Odin himself had come to propose to him, having assumed the appearance of one GEST, a man extremely well versed in this art. These are still extant in an old Icelandic romance †. But excepting some few, which are toler-

Vol. I.

U u

ably

bounding in harsh consonants, the first effort of their bards to reduce it to harmony must have been by placing these consonants at such distances from each other, so intermixing them with vowels, and so artfully interweaving, re-

peating, and dividing these several sounds, as to produce an agreeable effect from their structure. T.

* Worm. App. Litt. Run. p. 165. rec. edit.

† Vid. Hervarer Saga, c. xv.

ably ingenious, they are either totally unintelligible, or built on verbal equivocations. The poets were not limited to this kind only. There is mention made from the earliest ages of LOGOGRYPHS*, and other still more trifling species of wit, for which we happily want even names. Some of them must have cost much labour, and all imply such an acuteness and patience in the inventors, as would hardly be expected from a nation of warriors.

In regard to the old poems, all that is most needful to be known about them, is the peculiar genius, manner and taste that runs through them. Some of them present us with the faithful and genuine mode of thinking of those times, but they are often difficult to understand, and still more to translate. Nevertheless, to satisfy the curiosity of those readers who like to view the original manners and spirit of a people, I have endeavoured to translate such fragments of ancient northern poetry as would best answer this purpose. These translations, together with a few explanatory notes, will be thrown to the end by way of sequel, and as affording vouchers to this little work.

THERE

*. A LOGOGRYPH is a kind of stanzas of this species of false wit enigma, which consists of taking, in Ol. Wormii Literat. Runic. p. in different senses, the different 183, 185, &c. T. parts of the same word. See in-

THERE remains now but one word to add by way of CONCLUSION. When the truth of fact is once solidly established, we may safely reason concerning their causes. From a representation of such facts, (which are here only brought together, and left to speak for themselves), a picture has been given of the ancient northern nations. But having thus informed ourselves concerning the manners of this people, why may not we proceed a step farther, to consider the general causes of their character. It does not seem impossible here to discover and pursue the path which nature hath taken. A great abundance of blood and humours, strong and rigid fibres, together with an inexhaustible vigour, formed the constitutional temperament of the Scandinavians and Germans, as they do indeed of all savage people who live under a like climate *.

Hence

* *Sub Septentrionibus nutriuntur gentes immanibus corporibus, candidis coloribus, sanguine multo, quoniam ab humoris plenitudine, calique refrigerationibus sunt confirmati. Sanguinis abundantia ferro resistunt sine timore. Qui refrigeratis nascuntur regionibus ad armorum uehementiam paratiores sunt, magnisque viribus ruunt sine timore, sed tarditate animi refringuntur.* Vitruv. lib. vi. The ancients bear witness to these assertions; the sentiments of Vitruvius are here nothing more than their ge-

neral opinion. [Let the reader cast his eye over the following passages. *Septentrionales populi largo sanguine redundantes.* Veget. 1, 2. *Gothi conscientia virium freti, robore corporis validi, manu prompti.* Isidor. Chronic. p. 730. *Germanica nationes, seuerissimis duratæ frigoribus, mores ex ipso calidi rigore traxerunt.* Isid. Orig. lib. ix. cap. 2. *Scythæ gens laboribus et bellis aspera: vires corporum immense.* Justin. lib. ii. cap. 3. First Edit.]

Hence proceeded that impetuosity and violence of their passions when they were once roused ; and hence in their calmer moments that serious, phlegmatic and indolent turn. The exercises of war and the chase, which are great fatigues to a less robust people, were to them only amusements, the means of shaking off their lethargy, and of giving an agreeable and even necessary motion to the body. Their relish for this kind of life, the effect of constitution, strengthened in its turn the cause that produced it. Thus strongly moulded by the hand of nature, and rendered hardy by education, the opinion they entertained of their own courage and strength must have given the peculiar turn to their character. A man who thinks he has nothing to fear, cannot endure any sort of constraint ; much less will he submit to any arbitrary authority, which he sees only supported by human power, or such as he can brave with impunity. As he thinks himself not obliged to court any one's favour, or deprecate his resentment, he scorns dissimulation, artifice or falsehood. He regards these faults, the effects of fear, as the most degrading of all others. He is always ready to repel force by force ; hence he is neither suspicious nor distrustful. A declared enemy to his enemy, he attacks openly ; he confides in, and is true to others ; generous, and sometimes in the highest degree magnanimous, because he places his dearest interest in the idea he entertains and would excite of his courage. He does not willingly confine himself to such occupations as require more assiduity than

than action, more application of mind than body ; because moderate exercise is not sufficient to put his blood and fibres into such a degree of motion as is necessary to his own ease. Hence that distaste for the arts ; and as the passions always endeavour to justify themselves, hence also that contempt and prejudice which represents the profession of the arts as dishonourable. War then becomes the only employment he can exercise with pleasure. The frequent and extreme vicissitudes, the fatigues and dangers attendant on this way of life, are alone able to throw him into those violent and continual agitations his habit of body requires. Now, if we suppose after this a whole society composed of such men, to what a degree of emulation must their courage arise ? The love of distinction so natural to all men, having here no other object than personal valour, with what ardour must that quality have been cultivated and cherished ? The love of arms becoming thus their ruling and universal passion, would soon characterise their religion, dictate their laws, and in short form their prejudices and opinions, which decide every thing among mankind.

But it may be objected, that if the manners and character of the ancient northern people proceeded so much from the climate, as the same cause still operates, why is the effect altered ? This is only a specious difficulty. A nation is never solely influenced by climate, except in its infancy ; while it is uncultivated and barbarous, it is only guided by instinct ; the objects of sense, and the modes of living being as yet
simple

simple and uniform. When after some ages, reason has been expanded by experience and reflection, when legislators have arisen, who either by the native force of genius, or by observing other nations, have so enlarged their understandings as to perceive the necessity of a change of manners, it is then that a new system of principles, combats, and either divides the empire with, or totally triumphs over the first physical causes. Such was the immediate effect of Christianity in the North, an event which, considered only in a philosophical light, should be ever regarded as the dawn of those happy days, which were afterwards to shine out with superior splendour. In effect, this religion, which tended to correct the abuse of licentious liberty, to banish bloody dissensions from among individuals, to restrain robberies and piracy, softening the ferocity of manners, requiring a certain knowledge of letters and history, re-establishing a part of mankind, who groaned under a miserable slavery, in their natural rights, introducing a relish for a life of peace, and an idea of happiness independent of sensual gratifications, sowed the seeds, if I may so speak, of that new spirit, which grew to maturity in the succeeding ages, and to which the arts and sciences springing up along with it, added still more strength and vigour.

But after all, is it very certain, as the objection supposes, that the climate of Europe hath not undergone a change since the times we speak of? Those who have read the ancients with attention, think differently, and conclude, that the degrees of cold are at
this

this time much less severe than they were formerly. This is not a place to enlarge on a subject which might appear foreign to the work *. Let it suffice to observe, that the rivers in Gaul, namely, the LOIRE and the RHONE were regularly frozen over every year, so that frequently whole armies with their carriages and baggage could march over them †. Even the TYBER froze at Rome, and Juvenal says positively, that it was requisite to break the ice in winter, in order to come at the water of that river ‡. Many passages in Horace suppose the streets of Rome to be full of ice and snow §. Ovid assures us, that the Black Sea was frozen annually, and appeals for the truth of this to the governour of the province, whose name he mentions : he also relates several circumstances concerning that climate, which at present agree only

* L'Histoire des Celtes, tom. i. also mentions the coldness of Gaul, c. 12. may be consulted in this lib. lxxix. and Statius in Sylv. lib. matter. x. carm. i.

† Vid. Diod. Sic. lib. v. Dion

‡ *Hybernum fractâ glacie descendet in amnem,
Ter matutino Tyberi mergetur.* Juv. Sat. 6.

The abbé du Bos, from whom this quotation is borrowed, adds, that the TYBER at Rome now freezes no more than the NILE at Grand Cairo, and that the Romans reckon it a very rigorous winter if the snow lies two days on the ground unmelted, and if there is any ice on the fountains which are exposed to the North.

§ See in particular lib. ii. sat. 3 et 6.

only with Norway or Sweden *. The forests of Thrace and Pannonia were full of 'white' bears and white boars, in like manner as now the forests of the North †. The northern part of Spain was little inhabited for the same cause ‡. In short, all the ancients who mention the climate of Gaul, Germany, Pannonia and Thrace, speak of it as insupportable §, and agree that the ground was covered with snow the greatest part of the year, being incapable of producing olives,

* Vid. Trist. lib. iii. eleg. 9. De Ponto. lib. iv. eleg. 7. 9 10 — Tournesfort, a native of Provence, says in his Voyages, that there is no part of the world where the climate is more mild, nor the fruits more abundant than in THRACE; and that the BLACK SEA is now never frozen. Yet Pliny, Herodian, Strabo, and other authors expressly say, that THRACE is in a most frightful climate, that the inhabitants are forced to bury in the earth and to cover over with dung, during the winter, all the fruit-trees they wish to preserve. Ovid and Strabo agree in saying, that the countries about the Boristhenes and the Cimmerian Bosphorus are both uninhabited and uninhabitable by reason of the cold. Vid. Plin. lib. xv. c. 18. Herodian. lib. i. p. 26. Strabo 11. Ovid. Trist. lib. iii.

† Vid. Pausan. Arcad. c. xii. The Gaulish and German horses were very small and ill-made, as are these of the coldest parts of Scandinavia, which M. Buffon attributes to the severe cold of those countries. V. Hist. Nat. tom. iv. du Cheval. *Equi non formâ conspicui. Tac Germ. fumenta Germanis parva et deformia.* Cæsar. de bell. Gallic. lib. xiv.

‡ Vid. Strab. lib. iii. [Polybius speaks of Arcadia itself as situate under a cold and humid climate. Lib. iv. c. 21. First Edit.]

§ *Quid istis locis asperius?* Cicer. *Sithonia nix: Germania informis terris. Aspera cæla: Germania frugiferarum arborum impatiens.* Tacitus passim. *Gallia byeme frigidior.* Petronius. *Scythico quid frigore pejus.* Ovid. &c. First Edit.

olives, grapes, and most other fruits. It is easy to conceive that the forests being cleared away, the face of the country better cultivated, and the marshy places drained, the moist exhalations which generate cold, must be considerably lessened, and that the rays of the sun must have a freer access to warm the earth. The same thing has happened in North America since the Europeans have carried there their wonted industry *. The history of the North leaves us no room to doubt that there have been vast forests cut down; and by this single means extensive marshes have been dried up and converted into land fit for cultivation. Without mentioning the general causes which insensibly effect the destruction of forests, it was common to see these on fire, in order to procure fertile fields. This was so usual a practice in Sweden, that this country is supposed to have taken its name from hence †. A king of that country was surnamed the *WOOD-CUTTER*, for

* "Our colonies in North America," says a learned Englishman, "become more temperate, in proportion as we cut down the forests; but they are, in general, colder than the countries of Europe situated under the same latitude." Vid. Hume's Political Discourses, Disc. 10. p. 246. Father Charlevoix observes the same of Canada. "Experience," says he, puts it past contradiction, that the cold decreases in proportion as the

country is discovered." &c. *Journ. Historique d'un Voyage en Amerique. Lettre X. p. 188.*

† From the old Cimbric word *SERDIA*, to burn: Hence lands cleared away and prepared for cultivation are called in the North *Suidior* and *Suidieland*. The same derivation holds in the German dialect; *Sueden*, from *Sueda*, to burn. Vid. Olai Vereli Notæ in Hist. Gotr. et Rolv. p. 9. 1664. 12mo. T.

for having grubbed up and cleared vast provinces, and felled the trees with which it was all covered. Nor were they less cleared away in Norway and Denmark. Thus a change in the climate must long have preceded that in the manners.

What conclusion ought we to draw from all this? If for these fifteen or sixteen centuries, the arts, sciences, industry and politeness have been incessantly advancing in the north of Europe, we cannot but evidently discover three causes of this, which, though different in their natures, have yet been productive of the same effect. The first is that restlessness natural to the people of all nations, but which acts more forceably on the inhabitants of Europe, and is ever urging them to exchange their present condition, in hopes of a better: the second, slower but equally sure, is the change of climate: the third, more sensible, more expeditious, but more accidental, is that communication formed between mankind by commerce and religion, and cemented by a thousand new relations; which has in a short time transported from the south into the north new arts, manners and opinions. These three causes have continually operated, and the face of Scandinavia changes daily. It already shines with somewhat more than borrowed lights. Time produces strange revolutions. Who knows whether the Sun will not one day rise in the North?





